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OF THE LADY PIETRA DEGLI SEROVIGNI.

To the dim light and the large circle of shade
I have clomb, and to the whitening of the
hills,

There where we see no colour in the grass,
Nathless my longing loses not its green,
It has so taken root in the hard stone
Which talks and hears as though it were a
lady.

Utterly frozen is this youthful lady,
Even as the snow that lies within the shade ;
For she is no more moved than is a stone
By the sweet season which makes warm the
hills
And alters them afresh from white to green,
Covering their sides again with flowers and
grass.

When on her hair she sets a crown of grass
The thought has no more room for other lady ;
Because she weaves the yellow with the green
So well that Love sits down there in the
shade, —

Love who has shut me in among low hills
Faster than between walls of granite-stone.

She is more bright than is a precious stone ;
The wound she gives may not be healed with
grass :

I therefore have fled far o'er plains and hills
For refuge from so dangerous a lady ;
But from her sunshine nothing can give
shade, —
Not any hill, nor wall, nor summer-green.

A while ago I saw her dressed in green, —
So fair, she might have wakened in a stone
This love which I do feel even for her shade ;
And therefore as one woos a graceful lady,
I wooed her in a field that was all grass
Girdled about with very lofty hills.

Yet shall the streams turn back and climb the
hills
Before Love's flame in this damp wood and
green
Burn, as it burns within a youthful lady,
For my sake, who would sleep away in stone
My life, or feed like beasts upon the grass,
Only to see her garments cast a shade.

How dark soe'er the hills throw out their
shade,
Under her summer-green the beautiful lady
Covers it like a stone covered in grass.

Dante, Translated by Rossetti.

BALLAD.

WHY is it so with me, false Love,
Why is it so with me ?
Mine enemies might thus have dealt ;
I fear'd it not of thee.

Thou wast the thought of all my thoughts,
Nor other hope had I :

My life was laid upon thy love ;
Then how could'st let me die ?

The flower is loyal to the bud,
The greenwood to the spring,
The soldier to his banner bright,
The noble to his king :

The bee is constant to the hive,
The ringdove to the tree,
The martin to the cottage-eaves ;
Thou only not to me.

Yet if again, false Love, thy feet
To tread the pathway burn
That once they trod so well and oft,
Return, false Love, return ;

And stand beside thy maiden's bier,
And thou wilt surely see,
That I have been as true to love
As thou wert false to me.

Cornhill Magazine.

F. T. PALGRAVE.

CLYTEMNESTRA.

[“Clytemnestra, from the battlements of Argos, watches for the beacon-fires which are to announce the return of Agamemnon.”]

THE stars are clear above the Argive height,
Where soon shall blaze a redder, angrier
fire, —

Signal of answer to a long desire,
Sending the doom of Troy across the night.
When shall it flash upon thy steadfast sight,
Thou whose child bled beneath a father's
hand, —

When shall the Fury lift the flaming brand,
O Clytemnestra ! calling thee to smite ?

But he, the king, thy lord, by Ida's hill,
Hears even now the pæan sound on high,
Feels even now that hour's triumphant thrill
When wifely welcome and a city's cry
Shall drown in joy the faint, sad memory
Of her who perished when the winds were
still.

Spectator.

R. C. JEBB.

SONNET.

WEEP lovers, sith Love's very self doth weep,
And sith the cause for weeping is so great ;
When now so many dames, of such estate
In worth, show with their eyes a grief so deep :
For Death the churl has laid his leaden sleep
Upon a damsel who was fair of late,
Defacing all our earth should celebrate, —
Yea all save virtue, which the soul doth keep.
Now hearken how much Love did honour her.
I myself saw him in his proper form
Bending above the motionless sweet dead
And often gazing into Heaven ; for there
The soul now sits which when her life was
warm

Dwelt with the joyful beauty that is fled.

Dante, translated by Rossetti.

From The New Quarterly Review.
DRUMMOND OF HAWTHORNDEN.

BY GEORGE BARNETT SMITH.

AN excursion into the domains of the old English poets is one of the pleasantest recreations in literature. This field of research certainly shows no paucity of attractions for the patient and enthusiastic student, though it is one which has been too often neglected. The names of some of the sweetest writers in the language are probably entirely unknown to the vast majority of readers. Nor, perhaps, ought we greatly to wonder at this, seeing that it is a work of extreme difficulty to keep abreast of the writers of our own era. The multiplication of books compels the individual reader to restrict his acquaintance to those works which either his taste or necessity suggests. Occasionally, however, it is well to take note of the progress we have made since the age of the Renaissance in England, and useful to turn from the busy highways of the modern world to those by paths which lead to forsaken garden lands which have yielded so much richness and fragrance. Perchance we may discover that, after all — and setting aside those great lights of the earlier ages of letters — there were still in these ages many who, though now comparatively unknown, were the equals in genius of the favourite authors of our later time. Where shall we look, for instance, for a repetition since their own period of the grace of Herrick, of the delicious feeling and tenderness of Suckling, or of the stateliness of Shirley? One searches in vain for any approach to the music of the poets of the Renaissance amongst the later singers. Possibly, very probably, this age of iron and gold has stamped its impress upon the poetry too, which loses in graceful fancy what it gains in realistic power. And the change may be justified when we remember that with changing ages come changing manners. The romance that clung to the lives and characters of our forefathers has very nearly died out amongst us; our virtues are more solid, our vices are not so obnoxious, but with these strikingly preponderant advantages, we have lost the ease

and the courtliness which made life pleasurable. Poets no longer wander in sylvan glades, or indite "sonnets to their mistress's eyebrows." The lives of many of the most excellent lyric poets, if led now, would be accepted as affording ample evidence of insanity; but we, who would never think of imitating them in that respect, never laugh at those lives of theirs. A charm clings to them because of their work. They were the fore-runners of the giants of mind; they sang before the times were fully ripe; their notes were delightful, if not strong; and because their music was true we hold them in reverent and continual remembrance.

Amongst these early singers who deserve well of posterity was William Drummond, commonly called Drummond of Hawthornden. He was decidedly the best poet of his age in Scotland, and there were few in England who could be accounted his superior. It was no small tribute to his work that old Ben Jonson, the acknowledged sovereign of the realms of contemporary English literature, should take upon himself a journey from London to the North to see him, when that rough and burly Briton was scarcely in a fit condition to do so.

The lowest estimate which has ever been given of Drummond still leaves him a very high rank as a poet, whilst the highest lifts him to a pedestal so lofty as almost to be inconceivable. Hazlitt, a critic of no mean power and acumen, says: "Drummond's Sonnets, I think, come as near as almost any others to the perfection of this kind of writing, which should embody a sentiment and every shade of a sentiment, as it varies with time, and place, and humour, with the extravagance or lightness of a momentary impression." On the other hand, Hallam, the ever calm and philosophic, treats these same sonnets rather contemptuously, affirming that they "have obtained probably as much praise as they deserve." The historian, however, doubtless wished by this not so much really to dispraise the sonnets themselves, as to give a soberer tone to the opinions which had been generally current respecting them, and to

moderate the enthusiasm with which they were cherished in certain quarters. Turning from Hallam's view to that expressed by Phillips, Milton's son-in-law, who edited the edition of Drummond's poems published in the year 1656, we are not a little startled at meeting with this dissimilarity of language:—"To say that these poems are the effects of a genius, the most polite and verdant that ever the Scottish nation produced, although it be a commendation not to be rejected (for it is well known that that country hath afforded many rare and admirable wits), yet it is not the highest that may be given him; for should I affirm that neither Tasso, nor Guarini, nor any of the most neat and refined spirits of Italy, nor even the choicest of our English poets, can challenge to themselves any advantages above him, it could not be judged any attribute superior to what he deserves." This language must be admitted, even by the greatest admirers of Drummond, to be extravagant, and it leads to the conclusion that had its writer been as conversant with the Italian poets he has named as he was with Drummond, he must have moderated the strength of his assertions. For in Tasso, at any rate, we find qualities which are either absent in Drummond, or present in so subdued a degree as to forbid his being placed on a position of equality with the Italian poet. The great poet of Sorrento possessed a great breadth of view and a width of imagination to which Drummond could lay no claim; for fancy at its highest, however graceful and active, must not be confounded or compared with the greater product of the mind, which we very justly distinguish from it as imagination. These contradictory estimates, however, only afford a strong argument in favour of a thorough reconsideration of Drummond's work, and of an endeavour to assign to him his true place in the ranks of poets. Should we fail in this attempt, there is still sufficient interest left in the life and labours of this old Scotch poet to make a consideration of him and of his work pleasant and desirable.

Notwithstanding that this man was one of the most prominent writers of his age,

and in some measure identified with important political and literary movements, the materials available for his biography are scanty in the extreme. A brief memoir by Bishop Sage, and a few of Drummond's letters prefixed to a collection of his prose works and poems, published at Edinburgh in 1711, and a paper read before the Society of Scotch Antiquaries by the learned David Laing, form nearly all the trustworthy materials for a life of the poet.

It has been reserved for Professor Masson to supply a biography* which is not only the fullest yet written, but may at once be accepted as all that is necessary to a just appreciation of his character. All the well-known assiduity and conscientiousness of the biographer have been brought to bear upon the task, and the result is one that must inevitably please the lovers of Drummond. Mr. Masson's style is a little too limp; he occasionally becomes too colloquial, and is sometimes scarcely on a level with the dignity of his subject; but his book is a perfect mine of facts. Wherever it has been possible, by force of industry, to obtain anything which shall collaterally afford elucidation to any portion of his hero's history, such industry has not been wanting. The whole results of his researches have been tabulated with care; the facts marshalled in chronological order, and the story written with a clearness which is charming. The history of the time and the relations between England and Scotland have been reviewed with a calmness befitting the theme, and an absence of political and religious bias, all the more praiseworthy when we consider that on these points the poet and his biographer are at opposite poles. It is upon Mr. Masson's work chiefly—though not to the exclusion of other authorities whom we have examined—that we shall rely in the present article.

The first Drummond of the now classic Hawthornden was John, second son of Sir Robert Drummond, of Carnock, in

* "Drummond of Hawthornden; the Story of his Life and Writings." By David Masson, M.A., LL.D. London, Macmillan & Co., 1873.

Stirlingshire; the latter being of a family of Drummonds who had branched off from the more ancient Drummonds, of Stobhall, in Perthshire, whose chiefs had ranked in the Scottish peerage from 1471 as Lords Drummond. The poet was the eldest son of this first Laird of Hawthornden, and was born in 1585. From his earliest years young Drummond was thrown under the shadow of court influence — his father being gentleman usher to the king — and this may serve partly to explain his espousal of the cause of royalty in after life. Educated first at the High School of Edinburgh, he afterwards went to the University of that city, where he graduated. Shortly before this took place, King James was summoned to London to assume the English crown, and before leaving he distributed numerous honours, amongst which was that of a knighthood to the poet's father. Not long afterwards a greater honour was conferred upon another branch of the family, Drummond of Stobhall being advanced to the dignity of Earl of Perth. The next we hear of the poet (and the information concerning his earlier years is very scanty) is of his going abroad to obtain instruction in the law.

It is certain that Drummond must have gained much from his several years of Continental travel, and the study of the riches both of literature and art which he made during that time; especially when we consider that at this period foreign courts and nations were so much in advance of our own in matters of taste, music, and the arts of design. For all of these matters Drummond had evidently a natural bent and inclination; and his poetry would give one the impression, if all other kinds of evidence were wanting, that its author was a man of cultivated tastes, well versed in the polite arts, and of courtly bearing and demeanour.

On his return from the Continent, and in the midst of preparations to join the Scottish bar, an event occurred which changed the whole current of his life, as fortunate a one, perhaps, for posterity as the chance which prevented John Milton

from devoting himself to the Church. Drummond's father died, leaving his son Laird of Hawthornden at the comparatively early age of twenty-four. There was now no necessity for him to adopt a profession; and it can be imagined with what joy one who had been described by his professor, to the pupils under his care as another Quintilian, betook himself to his favourite pursuit of literature. Evidence exists that Drummond's reading at this period was of the most extensive and erudite character; in fact, it is stated in Mr. Laing's Hawthornden Manuscripts, that in the short space of eight years he had read more than two hundred and twenty separate books, many of being in several large volumes. When we remember the somewhat limited number of works at that time produced, it would seem that Drummond must have been acquainted with the great bulk of contemporary literature. It is interesting to note, that among the works which he had well studied were many in Latin, Greek, Hebrew, Italian, French, and Spanish. Most educated persons in his position at that period read French, but the chief studies of the secluded Laird were in Greek and Latin, with a great leaning also to the Italian. A glimpse respecting his ambition as to the course of his future life is obtained in the remark of his biographer, that "the delicacy of his wit ran always on the pleasantness and usefulness of history, and on the fame and softness of poetry." It is pointed out, however, that if he really desired to excel in the two walks just indicated, there was little encouragement for him to do so in the then existing condition of Scottish poetry. The grand flush of genius in Scotland had apparently ceased about thirty years before, and had been succeeded in England by the highest perfection of literary greatness. Professor Masson assigns several reasons for the intellectual sterility of Scotland at this time. One cause, he affirms, had been the incessant political strife in the northern kingdom; another, perhaps, is to be found in the strict and repressive nature of the Presbyterian system, except in a few grooves where it

chose to recognize individual efforts of mind; and a third cause was the great controversy between Presbyterianism and Prelacy. In England there was for the time freedom from all such distracting questions; and we can well understand, therefore, that while in Scotland the polemical fields were sown with the seeds of quick and lively thought, the field of literature became correspondingly bleak and barren.

At the time Drummond first devoted himself to literature, the first poet in Scotland—the only one of conspicuous talent—was William Alexander, afterwards Sir William Alexander, and finally Earl of Stirling. Of this poet, who earned considerable repute from both his English and Scotch contemporaries, Chalmers says: "His versification is in general very superior to that of his contemporaries, and approaches nearer to the elegance of modern times than could have been expected from one who wrote so much. There are innumerable beauties scattered over the whole of his works." To us he appears to have had but a small endowment of genius, though he possessed much scholarly feeling and talent. We do not intend, nevertheless, by this, to sum up the whole of the merits of one who undoubtedly made a considerable figure in both literature and politics: what we are concerned to notice is, that Drummond attached himself to Sir William Alexander's school; that is, he followed him in his determination to choose the English language, and not the northern dialect, as the vehicle for his poetry. It was not only after his retirement to Hawthornden that Drummond must have done something in verse, for we find that in one of his letters to a lady he made some references to poems which had either seen the light or were then in manuscript. Speaking of these poems, he observes: "Keep them, that hereafter, when time, that changeth everything, shall make wither those fair roses of your youth, among the other toys of your cabinet they may serve for a memorial of what once was."

Drummond's first public appearance as an author was on the occasion of a melancholy event affecting the entire nation, viz., the death of the Prince of Wales. This prince, though only eighteen years of age, was, judging by all contemporary accounts, a youth of unusual promise, and was so beloved that the mourning for him was universal. His death set in motion all the springs of elegiac poetry; and

amongst the poems produced there were few which could compete in merit with Drummond's first striking piece, entitled "Teares on the Death of Mœliades." This elegy has a good deal of vigour, beauty, and stateliness about it, though we should not be disposed to adjudge it such high praise as has been commonly awarded it, for it lacks that profundity of feeling which should pre-eminently distinguish such poetry. Mr. Masson thinks that the "Lycidas" of Milton most resembles it; but, except in the one point of pastoralism, we fail to detect any kinship. Milton had more skill than to use an unbroken succession of heroics wherein to depict his grief. The following lines will give some idea of Drummond's style at his early period: they are the closing lines of the elegy, just mentioned, on Prince Henry:—

Rest, happy ghost, and wander in that glass
Where seen is all that shall be, is, or was,
While shall be, is, or was shall pass away,
And nought remain but an eternal day:
Forever rest; thy praise fame may enrol
In golden annals, whilst about the pole
The slow Boötes turns, or sun doth rise
With scarlet scarf, to cheer the morning skies:
The virgins to thy tomb may garlands bear
Of flowers, and on each flower let fall a tear.
Mœliades sweet courtly nymphs deplore,
From Thule to Hydaspes' pearly shore.

There can be no doubt that these verses are both elevated and impressive, but the unchanging measure in which the poem is written (except under the manipulation of transcendent genius) does not afford scope for the display of the variations and paroxysms of grief, which can infinitely better be expressed by means of a somewhat uneven and varying metre.

About this time, and subsequent to the friendship which sprang up between him and Sir William Alexander, Drummond did what most susceptible poets have done in the course of their lives—he fell in love. But the course of his love was brief and its ending melancholy. "Notwithstanding his close retirement," says an old memoir, "and serious application to his studies, love stole in upon him, and did entirely captivate his heart; for he was, on a sudden, highly enamoured of a fine, beautiful young lady, daughter to Cunningham of Barns, an ancient and honourable family. He met with suitable returns of chaste love from her, and fully gained her affections; but, when the day for the marriage was appointed, and all things ready for the solemnization of it,

she took a fever and was suddenly snatched away by it, to his great grief and sorrow." This tragic event occurred about 1615, and had for its result the still deeper seclusion from the world of the sorrowing lover. The only outward effect it had, consisted of the publication of a volume of poems in 1616, in which he set forth his love for his mistress, and the grief which her untimely death had caused him. The title of the volume was of some length, "Poems: Amorous, Funerall, Divine, Pastorall: in Sonnets, Songs, Sextains, Madrigals: by W. D., author of the Teares on the Death of Mœliades." This was published by Andw. Hart of Edinburgh, and had so good a sale that a second edition was published with the briefer title, "Poems: by William Drummond, of Hawthorne-Deene." It is said that of the first edition of this work only one copy is in existence at the present time. His love story is told with some fulness in the course of these poems, which exhibit a tolerably wide range of verse, and have an elevated idealism, which had probably been touched into quicker and warmer action by the events which they celebrate. The heaping up of epithets and the constant use of metonymy, which distinguish the earlier poets, are found in the sonnets in the first part of Drummond's work. He seemed, in fact, to be constantly on the search for a profusion of comparisons. Take the following sonnet as a specimen, in which the poet ransacks nature only to pour contempt upon her most valuable treasures as compared with the charms of his lady:—

Vaunt not, fair heavens, of your two glorious
lights
Which, though most bright, yet see not when
they shine;
And shining, cannot show their beams divine
Both in one place, but part by days and nights.
Earth, vaunt not of those treasures ye en-
shrine,
Held only dear because hid from our sights,
Your pure and burnish'd gold, your diamonds
fine,
Snow-passing ivory that the eye delights;
Nor, seas, of those dear waves are in you
found,
Vaunt not rich pearl, red coral, which do stir
A fond desire in fools to plough your ground.
Those all, more fair, are to be had in her;
Pearl, ivory, coral, diamond, suns, gold,
Teeth, neck, lips, heart, eyes, hair, are to
behold.

The comparisons in the last two lines are very ingenious, if somewhat extrava-

gant; but in respect of extravagance they fall far short of many poems written by fellow poets of the same period. There are other sonnets on the beauty of his mistress which are more general in character, and exhibit a great delicacy of touch and ease of versification. We cannot here unravel the whole of the story as related in the poems. Suffice it to state, that the exquisiteness of the feeling of love, when it first broke upon his spirit, is told in a more impassioned manner than we should have expected from Drummond. We are then led through the various stages which distinguish love affairs generally—the bliss of a returned passion, the horrors of separation, the joy of reunion; indeed, the whole anatomy of the subject is laid bare before us. In the second part, however, the poet is in another mood, the grave has swallowed up all that beauty which he held so dear, and there is nought left for the survivor but lamentation and woe. He no longer joys in the glories of earth and heaven, because she is reft from him, and cannot tread the fair meadows by his side. He wishes to die to all that the world has to offer in the shape of bribes to happiness. He has lost all, and the treasure cannot be recovered. The minor chords of his being give forth their wailing sound in a variety of sonnets, all intensified with the one feeling of loss. The nature of the poet must have been one peculiarly susceptible to the feeling of despondency. He was very reserved, and, doubtless, at times somewhat austere, wrapping himself up in his own feelings, feeding upon his grief, and refusing to find in society the opportunity of assuaging his sorrow. A little light occasionally dawns in upon his soul, but after flickering for a brief period it dies away again, and leaves the darkness as dense as it previously existed. There are some noble strains appended to the volume which we have been examining in the form of "Spiritual Poems," where the soul of the poet seems for the moment to have caught a higher tone, and in which he enlarges on the advantages and the comforting power of faith in the Unseen. But here he only struggles with adversity; he cannot overcome it and rejoice. His nature re-asserted itself, and he could not shake off his mood.

A time came, notwithstanding, when the poet was perforce compelled to rise from his lethargy and gloom. The sombre covering of the spirit was to be doffed, and brighter garments assumed.

Drummond was sensibly affected by the general rejoicing which took place when King James, after an absence of fourteen years, revisited Scotland, and his presence amongst his Scotch subjects drew forth Drummond from his retirement.

In celebration of the happy event he set his muse to work, and produced "Forth Feasting," a long panegyric on the King. The poem is full of the most extravagant praise of the royal literary dabbler, who is credited with being one of the greatest sovereigns the world has ever seen, and his reign one of the most glorious and beneficent on record. Some latitude must be allowed, of course, to all who speak within the shadow of "the divinity which doth hedge a king;" but if history is to be believed, James was not credited with much dignity by any of his contemporaries when once outside of his presence.

Posterity has awarded the royal singer very different praise from that accorded to him by Drummond; and has relegated him to his due position amongst fourth or fifth-rate bards.

Amongst the most interesting periods of Drummond's life, and one which has drawn forth a considerable amount of animadversion upon him, is that of his acquaintanceship with Ben Jonson. It was scarcely likely that a poet of Drummond's mark could long pass unrecognized by that band of poets who made the literary world of London, at that time scarcely past its zenith. The great leader of this literary circle of brilliant wits and dramatists was, as we have said, Jonson. The "Devil Tavern," in Fleet Street, that street which has had more literary associations connected with it than any other street in the world, was Ben's headquarters, and there he published his flats on poetic and other matters, in which he was considered to be supreme. The sovereign of letters was personally as little of an ideal king as the monarch who filled the political throne; ugly of visage, unkempt of person, and careless as to cleanliness, he was, take him for all in all, the most extraordinary specimen of a leader of men which it is possible to conceive. However, Shakespeare out of the way, there was no disputing his talent and his right to supremacy. With all his roughness, however, and somewhat blatant speech, there was in him a sense of uprightness and honour, and in his better moods he was indubitably conscious of a far higher ideal than he ever reached.

It was in the year 1618 that Ben Jonson visited Drummond; on the whole the most curious and interesting of recorded literary encounters. The statement that Jonson went to Scotland purposely to visit Drummond is now disposed of as a mere invention. Mr. Masson preserves in his pages the myth as to how the two first met.

Drummond was sitting under the great sycamore tree in front of his house, expecting his visitor, when at length, descending the well-hedged avenue from the public road to the house, the bulky hero hove in sight. Rising, and stepping forth to meet him, Drummond saluted him with "Welcome, welcome, royal Ben!" to which Jonson replied, "Thank ye, thank ye, Hawthornden!" and they laughed, fraternized, and went in together.

It was while Jonson was under his hospitable roof, or at any rate immediately after he had left it, that Drummond put in writing his impression of the man. This it was which caused the northern poet to be so adversely criticised when his opinions were published after his death. It seems a somewhat singular thing to do, without doubt, but a man is surely at liberty to make what private memoranda he likes without any infringement of the laws of hospitality, and there is no evidence whatever that Drummond intended to publish these impressions of his guest. One can well understand that in many respects Drummond must have suffered a revulsion of feeling when he discovered what manner of man his hero really was. Much of the halo, which he had thrown round Ben's character must have disappeared as he saw him ply the wine bottle with such terrible assiduity, Drummond himself being a man of but moderate appetites. But the biographer hints at another reason why Drummond should have been a trifle disappointed with his guest. Being at the head of literature in his native country, "it may have been a little hard to hear Ben Jonson talk patronizingly of recent Scottish attempts as not bad for a region so far from the London centre, and recommend a course of Quintilian and English grammar as discipline for something better." This rough-shod riding over the sensibilities of one who could feel so keenly as Drummond, cannot have been very pleasant, and his patriotism as well as his personal vanity was clearly wounded; and we have reason to rejoice that this was so, for we have obtained thereby the portrait of a very distinguished poet, drawn by one of his con-

temporaries, and with no flattering lines in it whatever. Here it is :—

He (Ben Jonson) is a great lover and praiser of himself ; a contemner and scorner of others ; given rather to lose a friend than a jest ; jealous of every word and action of those about him (especially after drink, which is one of the elements in which he liveth) ; a dissembler of ill parts which reign in him, a bragger of some good that he wanteth ; thinketh nothing well but what either he himself or some of his friends and countrymen hath said or done ; he is passionately kind and angry ; careless either to gain or keep ; vindictive, but, if he be well answered, at himself. For any religion, as being versed in both. Interpreteth best sayings and deeds often to the worst. Oppressed with phantasy, which hath ever mastered his reason—a general disease in many poets. His inventions are smooth and easy ; but, above all, he excelleth in a translation.

More valuable even than this issue to his visit, nevertheless, were the notes made by Drummond of his conversations with Jonson. These were really noteworthy and most interesting, and had there been no other record of the meeting they would have made us quite contented. A good deal of the dramatist's genius shines through this recorded gossip, and we get also glimpses of eminent people, more serviceable for the formation of our judgment upon them than whole pages of speculation. Let us see what he remarked of some whose names are "familiar in our mouths as household words." Of Inigo Jones, he said, that, "When he wanted words to express the greatest villain in the world, he would call him an Inigo." "Queen Elizabeth never saw herself after she became old in a true glass : they painted her, and sometimes would vermilion her nose." "Spenser's stanzas pleased him not, nor his matter ; and Sir Walter Raleigh esteemed more of fame than of conscience." The world will venture to differ from Ben Jonson on both these latter points. Then, after considerable gossip as to Sir Philip Sidney's pimply face, he says, "Shakespeare wanted art. In a play, he brought in a number of men saying they had suffered shipwreck in Bohemia, where there is no sea near by some hundred miles." This is hypercriticism with a vengeance, especially as no other observations are made concerning the universal poet. "Had he (Ben Jonson) written that piece of Southwell's 'The Burning Babe,' he would have been content to destroy many of his. He esteemeth John Donne the first poet in the world for some things, but

that, from not being understood, he would perish." It is pleasant to hear him speak nobly of Selden. "J. Selden liveth on his own ; is the law book of the judges of England ; the bravest man in all languages." "Francis Beaumont loved too much himself and his own verses. Next himself, only Fletcher and Chapman could make a masque." In addition to much gossip of this character, Jonson narrated his own history to Drummond, which the latter carefully preserved, and he furthermore criticised the poetry of the Scottish bard with considerable freedom, as might be imagined from his character. Drummond reports that, after telling him his verses smelt too much of the schools, "he said to me that I was too good and simple, and that oft a man's modesty made a fool of his wit. He dissuaded me from Poetry, for that she had beggared him, when he might have been a rich lawyer, physician, or merchant." All this is very acceptable, for nothing can possess greater interest than the unbiassed opinion upon men and things generally which genius may entertain. We must leave the two poets, nevertheless, making complimentary verses to each other after their separation, and indulging in a friendly correspondence. Their intimacy appears to have terminated as suddenly as it commenced, and we next find Drummond, with his friend Sir William Alexander, assisting King James with his version of the Psalms. The royal conceit was far in advance of the royal talent, but it behoved the assistants of their august master to preserve a quiet tongue on this matter. Drummond seems to have executed the translation, which was very well received ; but who can gauge the depth of Alexander's sorrow at having to listen and to applaud the King's excruciating efforts at versification ?

Our next experience of him in the capacity of author is the publication of "Flowers of Sion," to which work was adjoined his "Cypresse Grove," the volume being issued in 1623. He had for some time back established himself in the public eye as the rising poet of his native country, and this new venture comprised all the fugitive pieces he had written during the previous six or seven years. He had now risen above the feeling which dominated his spirit after the loss of his mistress—that feeling that there was no other fact in the universe for him but the one expressed in the word bereavement. It was manifest that his soul, having been for a long period at its utmost tension,

had now relaxed a little, and Drummond was able to look out upon Nature with the true vision of the poet, seeing there the grand beauty of the physical All. The later poems are touched, as were also the earlier ones, by a kind of mysticism which is not too powerful to prevent them from being excellent in form, and generally susceptible of being grasped by the ordinary mind. Many of the poems are on strictly Scriptural themes; for Drummond possessed much reverential feeling. For the poems which take rather a scientific and astronomical turn, we have little affection, preferring, when we must have such facts dressed up for us in the form of poesy, to go to Milton for them, where the art is carried to its greatest perfection. But when any inferior mind attempts this class of work, the result is invariably dull and wearisome. The "Cypresse Grove" is an essay in prose on the subject of death, and upon this essay Mr. Masson passes the following very high judgment:—"Here, in a short series of prose pages, we have a meditation on death, by our poet of Hawthornden, which, for its pensive beauty, its moral highmindedness, and the mournful music that rolls through it, surpasses any similar piece of old English prose known to me, unless it be here and there, perhaps, a passage in some of the English divines at their best, or Sir Thomas Browne of Norwich in the finest parts of his 'Urn Burial.' It is matter of surprise that such a rare specimen of poetical and musical prose should have dropt out of sight." The essay bears out this encomium. Its philosophy is reasonable and consoling, deprecating the fear of disaster to the soul because earthly and material things bear ruin stamped upon them. The mind having originated from the Deity, it is superior to all the accidents which overtake inert matter, and man can find solid ground for his feet in this truth. Such is the leading argument of the essay, which is clothed in the rich and quaint language of one who was evidently no stranger to prose composition.

After the death of King James, and in the early years of his successor, we come upon Drummond in an entirely new character, and one the exact opposite to any we should have associated with him. It has been discovered, by means of a Latin document, that King Charles gave a patent to his "faithful subject, Mr. William Drummond," for the making of military machines. It is certainly somewhat astounding to find in our hero the Whit-

worth or Armstrong of his age. He appears to have taken up the matter heartily, and to have been very diligent in the discovery of weapons, the profits of which were to be reserved to him, because, as His Majesty expressed it, "there are not wanting certain envious and grasping persons who, from a sordid and base spirit, strive to get for themselves the use and fruits of other people's labours." It does not appear what became of all the inventor's improvements in deadly weapons, and whether his patient, which was for three years, was of any pecuniary service to him.

Passing from the death of Drayton, which naturally affected Drummond very deeply, we arrive at an interesting point in the career of the latter—viz., his marriage to Elizabeth Logan, grandchild of Sir Robert Logan of Restalrig, a great and ancient family. Though married at the mature age of forty-six, the poet lived to have by his wife the numerous family of five sons and four daughters. The next year after his marriage, Charles made his Coronation journey to Scotland, accompanied by a brilliant retinue. Drummond, nearly always openly and avowedly loyal to the Crown, composed an elaborate address, which was delivered before the King on his arrival at Edinburgh. But more serious events than were at the time dreamt of soon followed this visit. Charles and Laud were very much dissatisfied with affairs in Scotland, both Episcopal and otherwise. That celebrated struggle between King and people, which was afterwards to have so disastrous an ending for the former, now began. The leading features of that struggle are common history; but we must note here that "by temperament and culture Drummond was a philosophical Conservative, the friend of prerogative and constituted authority in all things, and adverse to all popular movements and democratic ideas as mere roarings of the Blatant Beast." This description will easily assure the reader of the cause he espoused in the struggle. His constitution abhorred political storms and disturbances: he desired, more than all else, peace; and at one time it is believed that he imagined sincerely it would be compatible with the introduction of a moderate Prelacy into Scotland.

At the age when most poets have only just attained their greatest poetic vigour, Drummond seems to have forsaken the Muse, and to have taken to prose. That he had no mean gift in the latter was ob-

vious by his production of the "Cypresse Grove," to whose excellence reference has already been made. The only question remained, what form of composition was his genius to favour now? In 1633, the question was decided for him by a correspondence between himself and the Earl of Perth. Burying himself in the genealogy of the family with which he was connected, the poet proposed to produce a table and statement of its various ramifications. One point which had considerable attraction for him was this—that in the records of the Drummonds there was related the story of an Annabella Drummond, wife of King Robert III. of Scotland; and from her, it was alleged, had descended all the Stuarts, some of whom had intermarried with other crowned houses of Europe. This was something to be proud of, and especially for the direct relative and descendant of Annabella—the Earl of Perth, who was the representative of the Drummonds of Stobhall. The researches of the poet in this new field resulted in a "History of Scotland during the Reigns of the Five Jameses" (1424–1542), which took many years to complete, the writer having been drawn insensibly on to widen his original intention, which was to write the story of King James I., who was the son of the Annabella Drummond already mentioned.

During this period political matters were assuming a threatening aspect. Laud had already commenced his high-handed policy in Scotland; and we find Drummond interrupting his literary studies to write a bold letter on behalf of Lord Balmerino, who was prosecuted by the Archbishop for what was designated "an infamous libel against the King's Government;" but which was, in reality, nothing more than a protest against tyranny—or, as he called it, and those who signed the document with him, a "Supplication." The prosecution made considerable stir, but virtually ended in smoke; and the next serious political event was the order by the King for the adoption of the new Service-book. After this came the Presbyterian rising, and the adoption of the Scottish Covenant—one of the most remarkable instances of unanimity in a nation, in the matter of religion, on record. At the head of this movement—or, at least, of the clergy who fostered it—was Alexander Henderson; and in a short time the chief landed gentry of Scotland had identified themselves with it. There is no evidence that

Drummond signed the Covenant; but he gave evidence of his satisfaction in a printed address, when he learnt that the Marquis of Hamilton, on behalf of the King, had come to terms with the leaders of the great movement. There are many noble passages in this address, some of which celebrate the glory and beauty of freedom; but the writer does not omit to support the idea of Prerogative, to which he had invariably been loyal. It is singular, nevertheless, to note that, in the matter of individual liberty of conscience, he was far in advance of the Covenanters, and gave much practical advice to the Presbyterian Clergy, which they needed, but were not too grateful for. The upshot of all was, that Episcopacy was banished from Scotland, and the Kirk re-established with an almost unparalleled amount of bell-ringing and bonfire celebrations. Drummond chose this time in which to rebuild his ancestral mansion; and the present house of Hawthornden bears the inscription (in Latin):—"By the Divine favour, William Drummond of Hawthornden, Son of Sir John Drummond, Knight, that he might rest in honourable ease, founded this house for himself and his successors."

The Gordian knot of politics in Scotland, which had apparently been solved, anon became more complicated than ever, and Drummond was in a difficulty. He could not approve the King in all his measures, and yet the bent of his inclinations was still to support the prerogatives of the monarch. He expressed his dissent from the majority in more than one epigram, but he finally conformed, if he did not consent, to the views of the larger and stronger party. So far did this submission extend, that it is supposed he at last signed the Covenant. At the same time he continued to write pamphlets, in which he urged moderation on the part of his countrymen. It is noteworthy that in one of these papers he made use of an expression which was afterwards regarded as veritable prophecy. "During these miseries," he observes, "of which the troublers of the State shall make their profit, there will arise perhaps one who will name himself Protector of the Liberty of the Kingdom. He shall surcharge the people with greater miseries than ever before they did suffer." It was subsequently pointed out, however, that Drummond was not thinking of England at all, but of Scotland, so that the prophecy was, in fact, no prophecy at all. During the Bishops' war Drummond had

a bitter pill to swallow; he was compelled to send men to swell the ranks of the army which fought against the King, while sympathizing with the latter, and the only revenge within his power was the issue of the following epigram, which had its rise in the fact that Drummond was obliged to supply his men to the army in fractions, his estates lying in three different counties:—

Of all these forces raised against the King,
'Tis my strange hap not one whole man to bring:

From diverse parishes yet diverse men;
But all in halves and quarters. Great King,
then,

In halves and quarters if they come 'gainst thee,

In halves and quarters send them back to me.

In writing squibs and pamphlets Drummond passed the next few years of his life. In secret sympathy with the King, he was obliged to be somewhat circumspect in public. After his death many papers were discovered, most of which his family considered it prudent to destroy, some of them being severe animadversions upon the leaders of the great English revolution. One of the pieces preserved is the following verse, written on the death of Pym, the distinguished Parliamentary leader:—

When lately Pym descended into hell,

Ere he the cups of Lethe did carouse,

What place that was, he called aloud to tell;

To whom a devil, "This is the Lower House."

Matters gradually got worse for the Royalists, and Drummond wrote a plea for Charles. The King, however, was finally surrendered, and a tragic end was the sequel to the stirring series of events. The last year of the sovereign's life was also the last in this world for Drummond. There is no doubt that the troubles of his native country must have embittered the closing days in Drummond's career (though not to the extent of hastening his end); for, whatever might be thought of his views, and his wise or unwise advocacy of them, he had at any rate in a marked degree the virtue of patriotism. The death of Charles was a tremendous shock to his spirit. With many others who were Royalists in heart, he never dreamt that the victorious Parliamentarians at Whitehall would dare to consummate their successes by the execution of the sovereign. The old gloom and melancholy from which the poet had nearly recovered returned with tenfold

force, and Drummond gave vent to his surcharged feelings in despondent sonnets and verses.

Drummond's death occurred at the close of 1649, and the biographer in recording it says that he was much weakened with close studying and diseases, besides being overwhelmed with extreme grief and anguish. He wanted but a few days to complete his sixty-fourth year. He was buried in his own aisle, in the church of Lasswade, near to Hawthornden. Mr. Masson disbelieves the statement that his end was actually accelerated by the King's execution, and (though his spirit must, as we have remarked, have been sore vexed), there is some plausibility in this, considering that ten months had elapsed between the two events.

Whatever fame Drummond has secured is of course due to him as a poet. He was pre-eminently a student and a man of letters. He had no qualifications as a leader of men. In the first place, he had a feeling half pity, half contempt, for the majority of the human race; and in the second, he lacked the strong sinews necessary "to breast the waves of circumstance," and to grapple with the opposition of foes. As a writer he could occasionally, in a happy moment, cast off an effective polemical sonnet or stanza, but even that was foreign to his nature, and when he did this, it was simply to relieve his feelings, which were unusually active. These political efforts have, however, long ago well-nigh sunk out of sight, except to those who really desire to see what the Laird of Hawthornden accomplished in more ways than the one in which he became justly famous. As to his position amongst the poets, Phillips's dictum is one which cannot possibly be upheld; but Milton himself, Phillips's uncle, had a high opinion of Drummond, and regarded his poetic vein as most true in kind, though not of the highest rank. His principal distinguishing characteristics are sensuousness (a quality which most of his critics have credited him with), pastoral beauty, and spirituality of thought. The sensuousness is sometimes strong and rich, and at others spends itself in dainty conceits, as when he sings of Phillis:—

In petticoat of green,
Her hair about her eyne,
Phillis beneath an oak
Sat milking her fair flock:

Among that strained moisture, rare delight!
Her hand seemed milk in milk, it was so white.

For his period, too, Drummond was remarkably pure, there being very few lines in the whole of his works to offend the taste of the most fastidious. His song was not high, but it was strangely musical and captivating. He has not left us lyrics which will vie with Herrick's, but he has given us more sustained efforts in poetry, if not of the very loftiest order. He never degraded his genius; he was true to the powers with which he was endowed. By no means the equal of Ben Jonson, Drayton, Marlowe, and Massinger in genius, he was superior to any Scotch poet of his time. He belonged rather to that school which had for its chiefs Chaucer and Spenser, though he was far from approaching these in strength of wing. His sonnets are justly considered as amongst the best in the language — a point respecting which, indeed, few critics will be found to differ. They possess some of the dignity we find in Milton, combined with some of the sweetness of Shakespeare. And another advantage which Drummond enjoyed was that his sensuousness and feeling were tempered by the reflective faculty; this has given substance to his verses, and made them worthy of occupying a prominent place in literature, instead of being merely the hasty record of transient emotions. A study of his works must inevitably result in yielding to him a prominent place amongst the national bards. Fancy, elegance, exquisiteness, tenderness — all these are to be found in abundance in him, and if he was not sufficiently powerful to make an age for himself in the literary annals of his country, he unquestionably adorned and strengthened the poetic era in which he was cast.

From All The Year Round.
THE COUNTRY COUSIN.

CHAPTER I.

OLD Tony Spence kept a second-hand book-shop at the corner of a back street in the busy town of Smokeford; a brown dingy little place with dusty windows, through which the light came feebly and yellowly. From the door one could peer down the narrow interior, with its book-lined walls and strip of counter, to the twinkling fire at the far end, where the old fellow sat in his arm-chair, poring over ancient editions, and making acquaintance with the latest acquisitions to his stock. He was a dreamy-looking old man, with a

parchment-like face and a snuff-coloured coat, and seemed made of the same stuff as the books among which he lived, with their dusty-brown covers and pages yellowed by time. He had been a school-master in his youth, and had wandered a good deal about the world, and picked up odds and ends of a queer kind of knowledge. Of late years he had developed a literary turn, and now and again gave forth to his generation a book full of quaint conceits, a sort of mosaic fragment of some of the scraps of knowledge and observation stored up in his brain, which was as full of incongruous images as a curiosity shop. In the morning he used to turn out of his shuttered dwelling about six, when there was light, and go roving out of the town to the downs beyond it, where he would stroll along with his hands behind his back and his head thrown upward, musing over many things he found puzzling, and some that he found delightful in the world.

His house consisted of four chambers, and a kitchen above a ladder-like stair, which led up out of the bookshelves; and his family of an ancient housekeeper, a large tom-cat, and his daughter Hetty, soon to be increased by the addition of a young girl, the child of his dead sister, to whom he had promised to give a shelter for a time. Hetty was often both hands and eyes to him, and wrote down oddities at his dictation when the evening candles burned too faintly, or his spectacles had got dim — oddities whose flavour was not seldom sharpened or sweetened by the sentiment or wit of the amanuensis.

"That's not mine, Hetty; that's your own!" the old man would cry.

"Only to try how it would go, father."

"'Tis good, my little girl; go on."

And thus in scribbling on rusty foolscap, and poring into musty volumes, tending a small roof-garden, and sketching fancies in the chimney-corner, Hetty had grown to be a woman almost without knowing it.

She possessed her father's good sense, with more imagination than was ever owned by the bookseller. She saw pictures with closed eyes, and wove her thoughts in a sort of poetry which never got written down, giving audience to strange assemblages in her dingy chamber, where a faded curtain of tawny damask did duty for arras, and some rich dark woodcuts pasted on the brown walls stood for gems of the old masters in her eyes. Lying on her bed with hands folded and eyes wide open, she first decorated then

peopled her room, while the moonshine glimmered across the shadows that hung from roof and beam. Sleep always surprised her in fantastic company, and with gorgeous surroundings, but waking found her contented with her realities. She was out of her window early, tending the flowers which flourished wonderfully between sloping roofs, in a nook where the chimneys luckily stood aside, as if to let the sun in across many obstacles upon the garden.

One summer morning she was admiring the crimson and yellow of a fine tulip which had just opened, when a young man appeared, threading his way out of a distance of house-top, stepping carefully along the leads as he approached Hetty's flower-beds, and smiling to see her kneeling on the tiles of a sloping roof and clinging to a chimney for support. He carried in his hand a piece of half-sculptured wood and an instrument for carving. Hetty, looking up, greeted him with a happy smile, and he sat on the roof beside her, and praised the tulips and chipped his wood, while the sun rose right above the chimneys, and gilded the red-tiled roofs and flamed through the wreaths of smoke that went silently curling up to heaven above their heads, like the incense of morning prayer out of the dwellings.

"I have got a pretty idea for your carving," said Hetty, still gazing into the flower as if she saw her fancy there. "I dreamed last night of a beautiful face, half wrapped up in lilies, like a vision of Undine. I shall sketch it for you this evening, and you will see what you can make of it."

"What a useful wife you will be!" said the young man. "If I do not become a skilful artist it need not be for want of help. Even your dreams you turn to account for me."

"They are not dreams," said Hetty, merrily. "They are adventures. A broomstick arrives for me at the window here at night, and I am travelling round the world on it when you are asleep. I visit very queer places, and see things that I could not describe to you. But I take care to pick up anything that seems likely to be of use."

Hetty stood up and leaned back laughingly against the red-brick chimney, with the morning sunshine falling all around her. She was not very handsome, but looked now quite beautiful, with her smiling grey eyes and spiritual forehead, and

the dimples all a-quiver in her soft pale cheeks. She had not yet bound up her dark hair for the day, and it lay like a rich mantle over her head and shoulders.

"I want to talk to you about something, Hetty. I have made up my mind to go abroad, and see the carvings in the churches; and we might live awhile in the Tyrol, and learn something there."

"Oh, Anthony!" the girl clasped her hands softly together, and gazed at her lover. "Is it possible we could have been born for such good fortune?"

Anthony was a young man who had come to the town without friends, to learn furniture-making, and developing a taste for carving in wood, had turned his attention to that, instead of to the coarser part of the business. His love of reading had led him to make acquaintance with the old book-man and his daughter. Evening after evening he had passed, poring over Tony Spence's stores, and growing to look on the book-lined chimney-corner as his home. He and Hetty had been plighted since Christmas, and it was now June.

That evening, when the evening meal was spread in the sitting-room above the shops, Anthony came up the ladder out of the book-shelves, just as Hetty appeared at another door carrying a dish of pancakes. The old man was in his chair by the fire, his spectacles off duty thrust up into his hair, gazing between the bars, ruminating over something that Hetty had told him.

"So," he said, looking up from under his shaggy brows, as Anthony sat down before him at the fire. "So you want to be off to travel! It's coming true what I told you the day you asked me for Hetty. I said you were a rover, didn't I?"

"Yes," said Anthony, smiling and tossing back his hair, "but you meant a different kind of a rover. I have not moved from Hetty. I shall not move a mile without Hetty. And you too, sir, you must come with us."

Old Spence lay back in his chair, and peered through half-closed eyes at the speaker. Anthony had a bright keen face, with rapidly changing expressions, spoke quickly and decidedly, with a charm in his pleasant voice, and had a general look of skilfulness and cleverness about him. There was not to be seen in his eyes that patient dreamy light which is shed from the soul of the artist; but that was in Hetty's eyes, and would be supplied to him now and evermore to make

him really a poet in his craft. Hetty's fancies were to be woven into his carvings that he might be famous.

"I don't know about breaking up and going abroad," said the old book-worm. "I'm too old for it, I'm afraid. Leaving the chimney-corner, and floating away off into the Nibelungen Land! You two must go without me, if go you must."

"I will not leave you alone, father," said Hetty.

"And I will not go without Hetty," said Anthony. "In the meantime, just for play, let us look over the maps and guide-books."

These were brought down, and after some poring the old man fell asleep, and the young people pursued their way from town to town and from village to village, across mountains and rivers, till they finally settled themselves in the Bavarian Tyrol. From a pretty home they could see pine-covered peaks and distant glaciers, and within doors they possessed many curious things to which they were unaccustomed.

"And I wonder if the mountains are so blue and the lakes of that wonderful jasper colour which we see in pictures," said Hetty. "How beautiful life must be in the midst of it all!"

"Yes," said Anthony, "and Hetty, you shall wear a round-peaked hat with silver tassels on the brim, and your hair in two long plaits coming down your back. 'Tis well you have such splendid hair," he said, touching her heavy braids with loving pride in his eyes and finger-ends.

Hetty blushed with delight and looked all round the familiar room, seeing blue mountains and dizzy villages perched on heights, people in strange costumes, brass-capped steeples, and strange wooden shrines, all lying before her under a glittering sun. Twilight was falling, the homely objects in the room were getting dim, the dream-world was round her, and with her hand in Anthony's she could imagine that they two were already roaming through its labyrinths together. It was not that in reality she could have quitted the old home without regret; but the home was still there, and the visions of the future had only floated in to beautify it. They had not pushed away the old walls, but only covered them with bloom.

The love of Anthony and Hetty was singularly fitting. He had gradually and deliberately chosen to draw her to him for the happiness and comfort of his life; his character was all restlessness, and hers was full of repose. She refreshed

him, and the sight of her face and sound of her voice were as necessary to him as his daily bread. Hetty's was that spiritual love which spins a halo of light round the creature that leans upon it, and garners everything sweet to feed a holy fire that is to burn through all eternity. In the hush of her nature a bird of joy was perpetually singing, and its music was heard by all who came in contact with her. No small clouds of selfishness came between her and the sun. She knew her meetness for Anthony and her usefulness to his welfare, and this knowledge lay at the root of her content.

It was quite dusk, and the scrubby lines on the maps which marked the mountains of Hetty's dreamland were no longer discernible to peering eyes, when a faint ting-ting was heard from the shop-bell below. The lovers did not mind it. It might be a note from the little brazen belfry up among the pines against the Tyrolese sky, or from the chiming necklace of a mule plodding along the edge of the precipice, or from the tossing head of the leader of a herd on a neighbouring Alp; or it might be the little pot-boy bringing the beer for Sib's supper. Sib, the old serving-woman, had come to the latter conclusion, for she was heard descending by a back way to open the door.

After an interval of some minutes there was a sound of feet ascending the ladder, and the door of the sitting-room was thrown open. The light figure of a girl appeared in the doorway, and behind followed Sib, holding a lamp above her head.

"Who is it?" cried Hetty, springing forward. "Ah, it must be Primula, my cousin from the country. Come in, dear; you are welcome!" and she threw an arm round the glimmering figure and drew it into the room. "Sib, put down the lamp and get some supper for her. Father, wake up! here is your niece at last. Tell us about your journey, cousin, and let me take your bonnet."

Hetty took the girl's hat off, and stood wondering at the beauty of her visitor.

Primula's father had brought her up in a country village where he had died and left her. She had come to her uncle, who had offered to place her with a dress-maker in Smokeford. The fashions of Smokeford would be eagerly sought at Moor-edge, and it was expected that Primula would make a good livelihood on her return, with her thimble in her pocket and her trade at her finger-ends.

She had been named by a hedger-loving mother, who died eighteen years ago in the spring-time, and left her newly-born infant behind her in the budding world. The motherless girl had, as if by an instinct of nature, grown up to womanhood modelled on her mother's fancy for the delicate flower whose name she bore. She had glistening yellow hair, lying in smooth uneven-edged folds across her low fair forehead. A liquid light lay under the rims of her heavy white eyelids, and over all her features there was a mellow and exquisite paleness, warmed only by the faintest rose-blush on her cheeks and lips. She wore a very straight and faded calico gown, her shawl was darned, and her straw hat was burned by the sun.

"She is very lovely — prettier far than I," thought Hetty, with that slight pang which even a generous young girl may feel for a moment when she sees another by her side who must make her look homely in the eyes of her lover. "But I will not envy her, I will love her instead," was the next thought; and she threw her arms round the stranger and kissed her.

Primula seemed surprised at the embrace.

"I did not think you would be so glad to see me," she said. "People said you would find me a deal of trouble."

Old Spence was now awake and taking his share in the scene.

"Bless me! bless me!" he cried, "you are like your mother! a sweet woman, but with no brains at all, nor strength of mind. Nay, don't cry, child! I did not mean to hurt you. I have a way of my own of speaking out my thoughts. Hetty does not mind it, nor must you."

Primula was trembling, and had begun to cry; and Hetty and Anthony drew nearer and comforted her.

CHAPTER II.

"THIS is a dull place, after all," said Primula next day, when Hetty, having shown her everything in the house, took her a walk through the best streets to see the shops. "I thought that in a town one would see gay ladies walking about, and soldiers in red coats, and a great deal of amusement going on about us. Moor-edge is as good nearly, and there isn't so much smoke."

"You thought it was a city," said Hetty, laughing. "I never thought about it being dull, but perhaps it is. We have gay ladies in Smokeford, but they do not

walk about in the streets. You may meet them sometimes in their carriages. It is a manufacturing town, and that makes the smoke. I don't wonder at all that Moor-edge should be prettier."

"Oh, there is a lady! Look at her hat! and there is certainly embroidery on her dress. I should like a dress like that, only I've got no money. Do you never see any company in your house, cousin Hetty?"

"Anthony comes often," said Hetty, happily, "and others come in and out, but we have nothing you could call company. You will see more of life when you go to the milliner's. There will be other young girls, and you will find it pleasant."

"I ought to have a better dress to go in," said Primula. "All the girls in the shops are nicely dressed. Have you got any money, cousin Hetty?" she added, hesitatingly.

Hetty blushed and was embarrassed for a moment. She had indeed a pound, the savings of years, about the expending of which she had made many a scheme — a present for her father or for Anthony, she had not quite decided. Well, here was her cousin who wanted clothing. She could not refuse her.

"I have a pound," said Hetty, faintly, "and you can buy what you please with it."

"Oh, thank you," said her cousin. "Let us go in and buy the dress at once!" And they went into the finest shop, where the counter was soon covered with materials for their choice.

"This lilac is charming," said Primula, longingly. "What a pity it is so dear!"

"The grey is almost as nice," said Hetty; "and I assure you it will wear much better."

"Do you think you have not got five shillings more?" pleaded Primula. "The lilac is so much prettier?"

"No," said Hetty, in distress; "indeed I have not a penny more."

"The young lady can pay me at some other time," said the shopman, seeing the grieved look in Primula's face.

"Oh, thank you!" murmured Primula, gazing at him gratefully.

"No, no, cousin; you must not indeed think of going into debt," said Hetty. "Come home and let us talk about it."

"Ah, I shall never get it," said Primula, with a heavy sigh, and the tears rushed into her eyes.

"I will take off the five shillings," said the fascinated shopman. "You may have the lilac for the same price as the grey."

Primula blushed scarlet, and murmured some tremulous enraptured thanks; and the shopman bowed her out of the shop with the parcel in her arms.

Though Primula was going to be a dressmaker, Hetty had to make this particular dress. "I don't know how to do it yet, cousin," said Primula; "at least not the cutting out." When the cutting-out was done, the owner of the dress was not at all inclined for the trouble of sewing it. Hetty had turned her room into a work-room, and stitched with goodwill, while the new inmate of the chamber sat on the little bed which had been set up for her accommodation in the corner, and entertained Hetty with her prattle about the life at Moor-edge, the number of the neighbours' cows, and the flavour of their butter; the dances on the green in summer-time, the pleasure of being elected Queen of the May. When the dress was finished and put on, Primula willingly took her steps to a house in a prominent street, with "Miss Betty Founce" on a brass plate on the door, and was stared at on her first appearance by all the new apprentices, who never had had so pretty a creature among them before.

Summer was past, and the dark evenings had begun.

"Anthony," said Hetty one day, "your work-place is near to Primula's. Could you call for her every evening and bring her home?"

Anthony changed colour, and looked at Hetty in surprise.

"Not if it annoys you," said Hetty, quickly; "but I don't think you would find it much trouble. She is greatly remarked in the streets, and some one who calls himself a gentleman has been following her about lately."

Anthony frowned. "I should not wonder," he said, angrily; "she is a thoughtless creature."

"You need not be so hard on her," said Hetty. "She is soft and childlike, and does not know how to speak to people and frighten them off."

"Well, I will be her knight, only to please you," said Anthony. "And see, here is the carving of the design out of your dream. Don't you remember?"

"The face among the lilies!" cried Hetty, examining it. "And it has turned out quite beautiful. Why, Anthony, I declare it looks like Primula!"

"So it does, indeed," said Anthony turning away.

"I suppose her face must have come

in my dreams," said Hetty, "for I never had seen her when this was designed. I have heard of dreams foreshadowing things, but I never believed it. However, you could not have a lovelier model, I am sure."

"No," said Anthony; and thenceforth he called for Primula every evening and brought her home. Sometimes Hetty came to meet them; more often she remained at home to have the tea ready. At first Primula did not like being so escorted, for she had made many acquaintances, and had been accustomed to stop and say good evening to various friends whom she met on her way from Miss Founce's door. And Anthony walked by her side like a policeman, and kept everybody at a distance. But she had to submit.

"Hetty," said Anthony, one day, when things had gone on like this for some time, "don't you think it is time she was going home?"

"What! Primula?" cried Hetty, surprised. "Why, no; she does not think of it: nor we, neither!"

"She is sometimes in the way," said Anthony, moodily.

"I never saw you so unkind," said Hetty. "Poor little Primula, whom everybody loves!"

"You and I are not the same to each other since she came."

"Oh, Anthony!"

"We never have any private talks together now. You never speak as you used, because Primula is present, and she does not understand you."

"I have noticed that," said Hetty; "but I thought you did not. I believed it was not my fault. You often talk to Primula about the things that please her. I thought it seemed to amuse you, and so I was content."

Anthony lifted Hetty's little brown hand off the table, and kissed it; then he turned away without another word, and went out of the house.

The kitchen was a pleasant enough place that evening, with firelight twinkling on the lattice-windows; coppers glinting on the walls; Hetty making cakes at a long table; Anthony smoking in a chimney-corner; while Primula moved about with a sort of frolicsome grace of her own, teasing Hetty and prattling to Anthony, playing tricks on the cat, and provoking old Sib, by taking liberties with the bellows to make sparks fly up the chimney. She stole some dough from Hetty, and kneaded it into a grotesque-

looking face, glancing roguishly at Anthony, while she shaped eyes and nose and mouth.

"What are you doing, you foolish kitten?" said Anthony, taking the pipe from his lips.

"Making a model for your carving, sir," and Primula displayed her handiwork.

"Bake it," said Anthony, "and let me eat it; and who knows but it may fill me with inspiration."

Primula laughed gaily, and proceeded to obey; and Hetty looked over her shoulder to enjoy the ridiculous scene which followed.

"It was a sweet face certainly," said Anthony. And Primula clapped her hands with glee at the joke.

Anthony put away his pipe and seemed ready for more play. It was no wonder, Hetty had said, that he seemed to like Primula's nonsense.

By this time Primula had learned to find Smokeford a pleasant place. Her beautiful face became well known as she passed through the streets to and from her work. Young artisans and shopkeepers began to look out of their open doors at the hour of her passing, and idle gentlemen riding about the town did not fail to take note of her. Her companions were jealous, her mistress was dissatisfied with the progress of her work, and the head of the little apprentice was nearly turned with vanity.

One night Hetty, going into her bedroom, found Primula at the glass fastening a handsome pair of gold ear-rings in her ears.

"Oh, Prim!" cried Hetty, in amazement. "Why, where did you get anything so costly?"

"From a friend," said Primula, smiling, and shaking her head so that the ear-rings flashed in her ears. "From some one who likes me very much."

"Oh, Primula!"

"How cross you are, Hetty; you needn't envy me," said Primula, rubbing one of her treasures caressingly against her sleeve. "I'll lend them to you any time you like."

"You know I am not envious, cousin. You know I mean that it was wrong for you to take them."

"Why?" pouted Primula; "they were not stolen. The person who gave them is a gentleman, and has plenty of money to buy what he likes."

"Oh, you silly child! You are a baby! Don't you know that you ought not to take jewellery from any gentleman?"

"You are unkind, unkind!" sobbed Primula, with the tears rolling down the creamy satin-smooth cheeks that Hetty liked to kiss and pinch. "Why do you get so angry and call me names? I will go home to Moor-edge and not annoy you any more."

"Nonsense, Prim! I won't call you baby unless you deserve it. Do you know the address of the gentleman who gave these to you? You must send them back at once."

Primula knew the address, but vowed she would keep her property. He bought them, he gave them to her, and there was nothing wrong about it. Hetty gave up talking to her and went to bed, and Primula cried herself to sleep with the treasures under her pillow.

The next day Hetty, in some distress, consulted Anthony about Primula's ear-rings. Anthony was greatly disturbed about the matter.

"I will talk to her," he said; "leave her to me, and I will make her give them back." And he spent an hour alone with her, breaking down her stubborn childish will. At the end of that time he returned to Hetty, flushed and triumphant — looking as if he had been routing an army, and bearing in his hand a little box containing the ear-rings and a piece of paper on which Primula had scrawled some words. The present went back to its donor, and Primula was sulky for a week.

One evening when the spring was coming round again, Anthony called as usual for Primula, but found that she had left the work-room early, as if for home. Arrived at the old book-shop he learned that she had not returned there since leaving, as usual, in the morning for her work.

"She has gone for a walk with some of her companions," suggested Hetty.

"She went alone," replied Anthony; and he thought of the ear-rings. "I must go and look for her."

Outside the town of Smokeford there were some pleasant downs, where, in fine weather, the townspeople loved to turn out for an evening walk. It was too early in the season as yet for such strollers; and yet Anthony, when he had gone a little way on the grass, could descry two figures moving slowly along in the twilight. These were Primula and the gentleman who had given her the ear-rings; a person whom Anthony had been watching very closely for some time past, whom he had often perceived following upon

Primula's steps, and whom, for his own part, he detested and despised.

"Primula!" he said, walking up to the young girl and ignoring her companion. "Come home! It is too late for you to be here unprotected."

Primula pouted and hung her head.

"The young lady is not unprotected," said the gentleman, smiling. "And pray, sir, who are you?"

"I am her nearest masculine friend," said Anthony, wrathfully; "I stand here at present in her father's place."

The gentleman laughed. "You are too young to be her father," he said. "Go away, young man, and I will bring her safely to her home when she wishes to go."

"Primula," said Anthony, white with anger, "go yonder directly to the tree, and wait there till I join you." The girl, terrified out of her senses, turned and fled as she was bidden; the gentleman raised his stick to strike this insolent tradesman who had dared to defy him; but, before it could descend, Anthony had grappled with him. There was a struggle, and Primula's admirer lay stretched on the green.

Anthony brought home the truant in silence, and for many days he came in and out of the house, and did not speak to her. Primula sulked and fretted and was miserable because Anthony looked so crossly at her. Anthony was moody and dull, and Hetty, with a vague sense of coming trouble, wondered what it all could mean.

CHAPTER III.

OLD Tony Spence was taken ill that spring, and Hetty was a good deal occupied in attending on him. Anthony came as usual in the evenings, but he did not expect to see Hetty much, and Primula and he amused themselves together. Hetty's face got paler during this time, and she fell into a habit of indulging in reveries which were not happy ones, if one might judge by the knotted clasp of her hands, and the deep lines of pain between her brows. Her housekeeping duties were hurried over, she fetched the wrong book from the bookshelves for customers, her sewing was thrown aside, her only wish seemed to be to sit behind her father's bed-curtain, with her head leaned against the wall and her eyes closed to the world. Sorrow was coming to seek for her, and she hid from it as long as she could.

One night old Spence asked to have a

particular volume brought him from the shop, and Hetty took her lamp in hand and went down to fetch it for him. There was a faint light already burning in the place, which Hetty did not at first perceive, as she opened the door at the top of the staircase, and put her foot on the first step to descend. She went down a little way, but was stopped by the sound of voices. Anthony and Primula were there.

"Yes," Primula was saying, in her soft cooing voice, "I love you better than any one. You fought for me, and I love you."

"Hetty ——" murmured Anthony.

"Hetty won't mind," whispered Primula. "She gives me her money and her ribbons. She won't refuse to give me you too — I'm sure of that."

They moved a little from behind the screen of a projecting stand of books, and saw Hetty standing on the stairs, gazing straight before her and looking like a sleep-walker. Primula gave a little cry, and covered her face. Hetty started, turned and fled up into the sitting-room, shutting the door behind her.

She sat down at the table, and leaned her head heavily upon her hands. The blow which she had been half dreading, half believing to be an impossibility, had fallen and crushed her; Anthony loved her no more. He had taken away his love from her, and given it to Primula; who with pleading eyes and craving hands, had robbed and cheated her. The greediness which she had tried to satisfy with ribbons and shillings, had not scrupled to grasp the only thing she would have kept, and held till death as her very own. Hetty's thoughts spun round and round in the whirl of new and uncomprehended agony. She had no thought of doing or saying anything, no wish to take revenge nor to give reproach. She was stunned, bruised, benighted, and willing to die.

Primula came creeping up the staircase, after crying for an hour all alone among the old books. Life was very troublesome, thought Primula, everybody was selfish and cross, and everything was either wrong or disagreeable. People petted and loved her one moment, and were angry with her the next. Anthony had rushed away from her in a fit of grief, although she had told him she loved him, and had given up a fine gentleman for his sake. Hetty, who used to be so tender with her, and so ready to give her everything, had looked so dreadfully there on that step of the stairs, that she,

Primula, was afraid to go up, though she was tired and longing to be in bed. Sobbing, and fretting, she crept up the staircase, and her desire to be comfortable overcoming her fear, she opened the door of the sitting-room, and came in. Hetty was sitting quietly at the table, with her head leaned on her hands, and she did not look up. "That is a good thing," thought Primula. "How dreadful if she were to scold me! 'Tis well it is not her way to make a talk about things." And she stole across the floor and shut herself up in the bed-room.

It was quite late at night when Hetty followed her into the bed-room, and then Primula was fast asleep, with the sheet pulled over her head and face, as if she would hide herself from the glance of Hetty's anger, even while she was happily unconscious of it. Hetty's lamp burned itself out, and she kneeled down in the dark to say her prayers. Her knees bent themselves mechanically in a certain corner of the room, but no words would come to Hetty's lips, and no clear thoughts to her mind. She only remembered that she ought to pray, and stretched out her arms, dumbly hoping vaguely that God would know what she meant. Nothing would come into her mind but pictures of the happy hours that Anthony and she had spent together in their love. She fell asleep stupidly dwelling on these memories, and unable to realize that Anthony had given her up; then she dreamed that she had wakened out of a terrible dream, in which Anthony had seemed to have forgotten her for Primula. How joyful she was in that dream! How she laughed and sang for ecstasy, and chattered about the foolish fancies that will come into people's minds when they are asleep! And then she wakened, and saw the dawn-light shining on Primula's golden head, and sweetly-tinted face, and she knew and remembered that Primula was the beloved one, and that she, Hetty, was an exile and an outcast from her Paradise forevermore.

Then, in that moment of exquisite anguish, in the leisure of the quiet dawn, a terrible passion of anger and hatred broke out in her breast. Everything that the light revealed had something to tell of her lost happiness, every moment that sped was bringing her nearer to the hour when she must rise up and give Anthony to Primula, and stand aside and behold their bliss and accept their thanks. She dared not let that moment come, she would not have it, she could not confront

it. She should do them some mischief if she were to see them together again before her as she had seen them last night. What, then, was she to do with herself? She dared not kill them, she could not wish them dead. It would not comfort her at all that they should suffer or be swept out of the world to atone for their sins. They had murdered her heart, and they could not by any suffering of theirs bring back the dead to life. What, then, must she do with herself? The only thing that remained for her was to get away, far out of their sight and out of their reach, never to behold them, nor to hear of them again, between this and the coming of her death.

She sprang out of bed and dressed herself hastily, keeping her back turned upon sleeping Primula, and, creeping down the stairs, she got out of the house. She felt no pang at leaving her home, and never once remembered her father; her only thought was to get away, away, where Anthony could never find her more. She hurried along the deserted streets and got out on the downs, and then she slackened her speed a little, quite out of breath. She knew that the path across the downs led to a little town, about ten miles away, in the direction of London. She had been too long accustomed to the practical management of her father's affairs, not to feel conscious, from mere habit and without reflection, that she must work when she got to London, in order to keep herself unknown. She would help in a shop somewhere or get sewing at a dressmaker's. In the meantime her only difficulty was to get there.

The whirl of her passion had carried her five miles away from Smokeford, when she came to a little roadside inn. She was faint with exhaustion, feeling the waste caused by excitement, want of sleep and food, and by extraordinary exertion. She bought some bread and sat on a stone at the gate of a field to eat it. She saw the ploughman come into the field at a distant opening, and watched him coming towards her; a grey head and stooping figure, an old man meekly submitting his feebleness to the yoke of the day's labour, though knowing that time had deprived him of his fitness for it. Hetty watched him, her eyes followed him as if fascinated; the look in his face had drawn her out of herself somehow, and made her forget her trouble. She wanted to go and help him to hold the plough, to ask if he had had his breakfast; to put her hand on his shoulder and be

kind to him. She did not know what it was about him that bewitched her. He turned his plough beside her, and as he did so, he noticed the pale girl sitting by the gate, and a smile lit up his rugged face.

Then it was that Hetty knew why she had watched him. He looked like her father. Her father! He was ill, and she had deserted him; had left him among those who would vex and neglect him! The untasted bread fell from Hetty's hands; the tears overflowed her eyes; she fell prone on the grass, and sobbed for her own wickedness, and for the grief and desolation of the sick old man at home.

"What is the matter, lass?" asked the old ploughman, kindly bending over her.

Hetty rose up ashamed.

"Sir," she said, humbly, "I was running away from my father, who is ill; but I am going back to him."

"That is right, lass. Stick by the poor old father. Maybe, he was hard on you."

"No, no, no; he never was hard on me. I have a sorrow of my own, sir, that made me mad. I forgot all about him until I saw his look in your face. I shall run back now, sir, and be in time to get him his breakfast."

The clock of the roadside inn struck six, and Hetty set off running back to Smokeford.

She ran so fast that she had not time to think of how she should act when she got home. When arrived there, she found she could have a long day to think of it, for Primula had gone to her work-room, and there was nobody about the house but Sib, and her father, and herself.

The old man had never missed her; but Sib met her on the threshold and looked at her dusty garments with a wondering face.

"Well, Hetty!" she said, "you did take an early start out of us this morning."

"I wanted a walk," said Hetty, throwing off her cloak, and making a change in her forlorn appearance. "Is my father's breakfast ready? I'm afraid I am late."

Old Tony Spence did not even remark that his daughter was unusually pale, nor that her dress was less neat than usual as she carried in his tea and toast. She was there, and that was everything for him. That she had been that morn-

ing flying like a hunted thing from Smokeford, sobbing in the grass five miles away from her home; that he had lost her forever, only for a strange old man following a plough in a distant field; of these things he never could know. Hetty was one of the people who do not complain of the rigour of the struggle that is past.

All day she sat by her father's side, in the old place behind the bed-curtain. He was getting better, and showed more lively interest in the world than she had seen in him since he first fell ill. Through the window he could see, as he lay, the little roof-garden which had been accustomed to look gay every summer for years. It was colourless now and untrimmed.

"Hetty, dear," he said, "how is it that you have been neglecting your flowers? Perhaps, you think it isn't worth while to keep up the little garden any longer? You will be going off with Anthony. Is any day settled for the wedding?"

"No, father," said Hetty, keeping her white, drawn face well behind the curtain. "We could not think of that until you are on your feet again."

In spite of her effort to save him the pain of an unhappy thought just now, something in her voice struck upon the old man strangely. He was silent for a while, and lay ruminating.

"Hetty, let me see your face."

Hetty looked forth from her hiding-place unwillingly, but kept her face as much as possible from the light.

"What do you want with it, Daddy? You have seen it before."

"'Tis a comely face, Hetty; and others have thought so besides me. I don't like the look on it now, my girl. Child! what's the matter with you? Out with it this minute! If he's going to fail you, it will be a black day for the man. I'll murder him!"

"Hush! hush! I have told you nothing of the kind."

"Deny it, then, this moment; and tell me no lie."

Hetty sat silent and scared.

"Is it that doll from Moor-edge that has taken his fancy?"

"He has not told me so."

"My lass! why do you play hide and seek with your old father? I know it is as I have said. Let me rise! Do not hold me; for I will horsewhip him to death!"

Hetty held him fast by the wrists.

"I will turn her out-of-doors without a character; and, though I am a weak, old

man, I will punish him before the eyes of the town."

For a moment Hetty's angry heart declared in silence that they would deserve such punishment; and that she could bear to see it. But she said—

"Father, you know you will do neither of those cruel things. Listen to me, father. I am tired of Anthony! Let him go with—Primula. You and I will be happy here together when they are gone."

The old man fell back on his pillow exhausted. After a time, he drew his daughter towards him, took her face between his hands, and looked at it.

"Let it be as you say," he said, "only don't let me see them. You're a brave girl; and I'll never scold you again. We'll be happy when they're gone. We'll finish that little book of mine, and—and—"

His voice became indistinct, and he dropped suddenly asleep. Hetty sat on in her corner, thinking over her future, and thanking Heaven that she had at least this loving father left to her. After an hour or two had passed, she looked up and noticed a change in the old man's face. He was dead.

CHAPTER IV.

It was new and awful to Hetty to have neither father nor lover to turn to in her desolation. She got over one terrible week, and then when the old man was fairly under the clay she broke down and fell ill, and Sib nursed her. Primula hung about the house, feeling guilty and uncomfortable, and Anthony came sometimes to ask how Hetty fared. He brought fruit and ice for her, offering them timidly, and Sib accepted them gladly and poured out her anxiety to him, all unconscious that there was anything wrong between the lovers. Primula sulked at Anthony, who seemed to be thinking much more of Hetty than of her. The old book-shop was closed for good, and the Spences' happy little home was already a thing of the past.

Hetty thought she would be glad to die; but people cannot die through mere wishing, and so she got better. When she was able to rise Sib carried her into the little sitting-room and placed her in her father's old arm-chair; and seated here, one warm summer evening, she sent to beg Anthony to come and speak with her.

Anthony's heart turned sick within him as he looked on the wreck of his

once adored Hetty. Her wasted cheeks and hollow eyes made a striking contrast to Primula's fair smooth beauty. Yet in her spiritual gaze, and on her delicate lips, there still sat a charm which Anthony knew of old, and still felt; a charm which Primula never could possess.

"We are not going to talk about the past," said Hetty, when the first difficult moments were over. "I only want to tell you that Primula and you are not to look on me as an enemy. I am her only living friend, and this is her only home. She shall be married from here; and then we will separate and meet no more."

"You are too good," he stammered, "too thoughtful for us both. Hetty," he added, hesitatingly, "I dare not apologize for my conduct, nor ask your forgiveness. I can only say I did not intend it. I know not how it came about—she bewitched me."

Hetty bowed her head with a cold, stately little gesture, and Anthony backed out of the room, feeling himself rebuked, dismissed, forgiven. He went to Primula; and Hetty sat alone in the soft summer evening, just where they two had sat a year ago planning their future life.

"She is too good for me," thought Anthony, as he walked up the street. "Primula will vex me more, but she will suit me better."

Still he felt a bitter pang as he told himself that Hetty's love for him was completely gone. Of course it was better that it should be so, but still—he knew well that Primula could never be to him the sweet enduring wife that Hetty would have been. He knew also that his love for Primula was not of the kind that would last; whereas Hetty would have made his peace for all time. Well, the mischief was done now and could not be helped. He hardly knew himself how he had slipped into his present position.

When Hetty found that she had indeed got to go on with her life, she at once set about marking out her future. She had a cousin living on an American prairie with her husband and little children, who had often wished that Hetty would come out to her. And Hetty determined to go. She sold off the contents of the old book-shop, only keeping one or two volumes, which, with her father's unfinished manuscript, she stowed away carefully in her trunk. Primula had given up her work at the dress-maker's, and was busy making her clothing

for her wedding. Hetty was engaged in getting ready for her journey. The two girls sat all day together sewing. They spoke little, and there was no pretence of cordiality between them. Hetty had strained herself to do her utmost for this friendless creature, who had wronged her, but she could find no smiles nor pleasant words to lighten the task. Pale and silent, she did her work with trembling fingers and a frozen heart. Primula, on her side, sulked at Hetty, as if Hetty had been the aggressor, and sighed and shed little tears between the fitting on and the trimming of her pretty garments. In the evenings, Primula was wont to fold up her sewing, and go out to walk; with Anthony, supposed Hetty, who sometimes allowed herself to weep in the twilight, and sometimes walked about the darkening room, chafing for the hour to come which would carry her far away from these old walls, with their intolerable memories.

So Hetty endured the purgatory to which she had voluntarily condemned herself. Anthony came into the house no more; Primula had her walks with him, and sometimes it was very late when she came home. But Hetty never chid her now. Primula was her own mistress, and could come and go as she liked, from under this roof, which her cousin's generosity was upholding over her head.

One evening, a gossip of the neighbourhood, one who had known Hetty in her cradle, came in with a long piece of knitting in her hands, to sit an hour with Hetty, and keep her company.

"And so they do say you are going to America," she said, "all alone, that long journey, and everybody thinking this many a day that it was you that was to marry Anthony Frost. And now it is that Primula. People did say, my dear, that they have treated you badly between them, but I couldn't believe that, and you behaving so beautifully to them. Of course it shuts people's mouths to see the girl stopping here with you and preparing for her wedding."

Said Hetty, "I cannot take the trouble to contradict idle stories. Anthony Frost is a very old friend, and Primula is my cousin. It would be strange if I did not try to be of use to them."

"Of course, of course, when there's no reason for your being angry with them; but all the same, my dear, you'd have been a far better wife for him than that flighty little fool that he has chosen. He has changed his mind about many a

thing it seems, for he has taken a house in Smokeford, and is setting up as a cabinet-maker, instead of turning out a sculptor, no less, as some people said he had a mind to do. Well, well! it's none of my business to be sure, and I do hope they'll be as happy as if they had both been a bit wiser."

"I see no reason why they should not be happy," said Hetty, determined to act her part to the end. And the gossip went away protesting to her neighbours that there never could have been anything but friendship between Anthony and Hetty.

"There's no girl that had been cheated could behave as she's doing," said the gossip, "and she's as brave as a lion about the journey to America." And after this people found Hetty not so interesting as they had thought her some time ago.

The time for the wedding approached. Primula's pretty dresses and knick-knacks of ornament were finished and folded in a trunk, and she arranged them and re-arranged them; took them out and tried them on, and put them back again. She went out for her evening's walks, and Hetty waited up for her return, and let her into the house in the fine clear starlight of the summer nights, and the two girls went to bed in silence, and neither sought to know anything of the thoughts of the other. And so it went on till the night that was the eve of Primula's wedding. On that night Primula went out as usual and did not come back.

The arrangement for the next day had been that Anthony and Primula should be married early in the morning, and go from church to their home. Hetty intended starting on her own journey a few hours later, but she said nothing about her intention, wishing to slip away quietly out of her old life at the moment when the minds of her acquaintance were occupied, and their eyes fully filled with the wedding.

She did not wonder that Primula should stay out late on that particular evening. It was a beautiful night, the sky a dark blue, the moonlight soft and clear. Hetty wandering restlessly in and out the few narrow chambers of her old home, once so delightful and beloved, now grown so dreary and haunted, and saw the silver light shining on the roofs and chimneys, and on the dead flowers and melancholy evergreens of her little roof-garden. Only a year ago she had cherished those withered stalks, with Anthony by her

side, and they had smiled together over their future in the glory of the sunrise. Now all that fresh morning light was gone, the blossoms were withered away, and her heart was withered also. Faith and hope were dead, and life remained with its burden to be carried. She shut her eyes from sight of the deserted walls, with their memories, and thought of the great world-wide sea, which she had never beheld, but must now reach and cross; and she longed to be on its bosom with her burden.

The hours passed and Primula did not return. Hetty thought this strange, but it did not concern her. Primula and her lover and their affairs seemed to have already passed out of her life and left her alone. She did not go to bed all night, and she knew she was waiting for Primula, but her mind was so lost in its own loneliness that it could not dwell upon the conduct of the girl. The daylight broke, and found her sitting pale and astonished in the empty house, and then her eyes fell on a letter which the night-shadows had hidden from her where it lay on the table. It was written in Primula's scratchy writing, and was addressed to Hetty.

"I am going away to be married," wrote Primula. "Anthony and you were both very good to me once, but you are too cold and stern for me lately. The person I am going with is kinder and pleasanter. I am to be married in London, and after that I am to be taken to travel. When I come back I shall be a grand lady, and I shall come to Smokeford; and I shall order some dresses from Miss Flounce, I can tell you. I am very glad that Anthony and you can be married after all. He was always thinking of you more than me; I could see that this long while back. I hope you will be happy, and that you will be glad to see me on my return. Your affectionate PRIMULA."

Hetty sat a long time motionless, quite stupefied, with the letter in her hand.

"Poor little ungrateful mortal," thought she; "Heaven shield her, and keep her from harm!" And then she thought of her own little cup of life-happiness spilled on the earth for this.

"Oh, what waste! what waste!" moaned poor Hetty, twisting the note in her fingers. And then she straightened it and folded it again, and put it in an envelope addressed to Anthony, and she

hastened to send it to him, lest the hour should arrive for the wedding, and the bridegroom should come into her presence seeking his bride.

When this had been despatched, she set about cording her trunks, and taking her last farewell of Sib, who was too old to follow her to America, and was nigh heart-broken at staying behind. When the last moment came she ran out of the house without looking right or left. And she was soon in the coach, and the coach was on its way to the sea-port from whence her vessel was to sail.

When Anthony received the note, he felt much anger and amazement, but very little grief. Primula's audacity electrified him; and then he remembered that she was not treating him worse than he had treated Hetty. Let her go there! she was a light creature, and would have brought him misery if she had married him. Her soft foolish beauty and bewitching ways faded from his mind after half an hour's meditation; and Anthony declared himself free. And there was Hetty still in her nest behind the old book-shop; as sweet and as precious as when they were lovers a year ago. The last few months were only a dream, and this was the awaking.

Hetty's pale cheeks would become round and rosy once more, and she must forgive him for the past, so urgently would he plead to her. How badly he had behaved!

Anthony put on his hat and went out to take a walk along a road little frequented, eager to escape from the gaze of his acquaintance in the town, anxious to think things thoroughly over, and to consider how soon he could dare to present himself to Hetty. Not for a long time, he was afraid. He remembered her stern pale look when he had last seen her, and how sure he had felt when turning away from her that her love was dead. A chill came over him, and he hung his head as he walked. Hetty was never quite like other girls, and it might be — it might be that her heart would be frozen to him forevermore.

Just at this moment a cloud of dust enveloped Anthony, and the mail coach passed him, whirling along at rapid speed. Hetty was in the coach and she saw him, walking dejectedly on the road alone with his trouble. She turned her face away lest he should see her; and then her heart gave one throb that made her lean from the window, and wave her hand

to him in farewell. He saw her; he rushed forward; the coach whirled round a bend of the road.

Hetty was gone.

From Blackwood's Magazine.
THE POETS AT PLAY.

If we were not told it by the poets we should not all of us take so readily for granted that childhood was our happiest time. They are so entirely agreed upon it—however much they differ from one another in other matters—they are so unanimous here, that we accept it as true to a truism. "The heart of childhood is all mirth," says the "Christian Year," and its generations of readers have echoed "of course" without asking each of himself if it were indeed so in his individual case. But whether it be true universally or no, it probably is true with the poets; and if so, then common consent derived from a common experience proves one point, that high animal spirits and exceptional vivacity are as essential to the making of a poet as what we call genius. Considering how exceedingly dismal is some of the poetry of the world, and on the other hand how much lively verse lacks every quality of true poetry, this may not be at once accepted. No doubt mere vivacity hurries many people into mistaking fervour of temperament for inspiration: like Doeg in the satire, who was

Too warm on picking work to dwell,
But fagoted his notions as they fell,
And if they rhymed and rattled all was well.

But the effort of giving harmonious voice to genuine inspiration cannot be sustained without a constitutional elation, a keen enjoyment in the exercise. Rhymes even will only run when the spirits are serene to gaiety. Verse would not be the accepted vehicle for effervescing gaiety if the writer did not show *himself* all alive with the delight of his theme. We do not think of Milton as a man of mirth, but spirits dance and sparkle in "L'Allegro," that perennial fount of cheerfulness. No doubt the temperament capable of exaltation to the point of rapture has its relapses, to be made excellent capital of when the cloud is blown over. But the vivacity which helps poets to make verses does not confine itself to this office. It belongs to their nature, often passing the bounds, and through excessive indulgence

inducing reaction, but still there and part of themselves so long as they write poetry that deserves the name: though it is now not the common fashion of poets to own to this capacity for jollity as frankly as Prior in his epitaph upon himself—

And alone with his friends, lord, how merry
was he!

No poetry is written in the dumps, though the remembrance and experience of this gloomy condition are fertile themes. Thus Coleridge in justifying the egotism of melancholy verse. "Why then write sonnets or monodies? Because they give me pleasure when perhaps nothing else could. After the more violent emotions of sorrow the mind demands amusement, and can find it in employment alone; but full of the late sufferings it can endure no employment not in some measure connected with them."

Cowper, who might seem an instance against this view, is in reality a strong support of it: so long as he could keep the despondency of insanity at arm's length, he was the cheerfulest of men. "I never could take a *little* pleasure in anything," he writes; and his constitutional vivacity was such that, as a boy exulting in his strength and activity, and observing the evenness of his pulse, he began to entertain with no small complacency a notion that perhaps he might never die. He was fully conscious of this vivacity as a stimulus, as when playfully addressing Lady Austen—

But when a poet takes the pen,
Far more alive than other men,
He feels a gentle tingling come
Down to his finger and his thumb.

Wordsworth says—

We poets begin our life in gladness,
But thereof comes in the end satiety and madness.

With Cowper they ran side by side, the one quite as marked as the other. Pleasure in his work contended with horror. "You remember," he writes to his friend, "the undertaker's dance in the Rehearsal, which they perform in crape hats and black cloaks to the tune of Hob and Nob, one of the sprightliest airs in the world. Such is my fiddling and dancing." So long as he could describe his despair in sapphics, and illustrate it in such harmonious stanzas as his "Castaway," we detect pleasure of some sort in the exercise of his gift, just as we see it in Burns, "still caring, despairing," in

his beautiful ode. The two influences are in visible contention. Many poets have the stigma in a lesser degree of depression of spirits; but if they wrote well, it was when the incubus was shaken off. Johnson was, he used to say, miserable by himself, and hated going to bed; but while he could get people to sit up with him he exultingly enjoyed life, and constituted the life and inspiration of the company, which no desponding man can possibly be.

Grey is a genuine instance of a poet without this exceptional vivacity of temperament. He was witty and humorous, but habitually his spirits were in a low key, and the consequence was, no poet who got himself a name ever wrote so little. He had everything of a poet but social instincts and animal spirits; but these deserted him wholly for long periods during which his muse was absolutely tongue-tied. When his friends urged him he answered, "It is indeed for want of spirits that my studies lie among the cathedrals, tombs, and ruins. At present I feel myself able to write a catalogue or to read a peerage-book or Miller's Gardeners' Dictionary, and am thankful there are such employments in the world."

All this does not prevent the composition of poetry being the hardest work the mind can exercise itself upon: nor does the fact contradict its being the highest form of enjoyment. All vigorous intellectual pleasure needs to be worked up to with effect. We cannot read fine poetry which opens and revives in us a world of keen sensation without a degree of labour from which men too often shrink, preferring lower satisfactions more easily and lazily come by.

The poet, knowing what his real achievements cost him, never withholds them from the world of readers. We need expect no discoveries of this nature in the private records he leaves behind him, unless, like Wordsworth, he deliberately postpones the publication of some cherished manuscript till after his death. But if the gift of verse is a pleasure, it will be played with apart from solemn duty either to the world or the poet's own fame. There will be amusement in adapting it to homely purposes—it will break out at odd times and in odd places, and be characteristic of the man often beyond what he designs for a larger and more critical audience. Whatever a man of genius writes because it pleases him to write it, will tell us something of

himself; though it be but a direction to his printer, an invitation to dinner, or a receipt for the cook. These little spurts of the Muse are quite distinct from the *vers de société* which amateurs turn off, whether easily or laboriously, as the best they can do—specimens of their powers in an unfamiliar field. They are especially not examples; we were never meant to see them; neither "reader" nor critic was in the poet's mind, but something closer and more intimate. The most prosaic doggerel of the true poet stands on a different footing from the rhymes of a writer with whom verse is not a natural medium. He would not commit himself to it, but as the indulgence of some impulse which belongs to his poet nature. With his name attached—and this proviso is sometimes necessary, for we have not all the discrimination to detect the master-hand under the homely disguise—we see something that distinguishes it, and stamps his character upon it. An impulse of some kind drives him to express a thought in verse, because it is easier to convey it that way, because it wraps it up so as to allow of a thing being said which might have looked awkward, or bold, or egotistical in prose, or because it best expresses relief from a task or a burden. With the poet, verse is his natural medium for a good deal that the Muse is not generally invoked for; and we like to see how far verse is a language, not a task—to see the "numbers come" on any stimulus. There are poets who never willingly wrote a careless line. Crabbe might have been thought one of these—so careful, so measured, so little egotistical; but we once find him indulging in the repetition of some verses which he acknowledged were not of the most brilliant description, but favourites, because they had amused the irksome restraint of life as chaplain in a great house:—

Oh! had I but a little hut
That I might hide my head in;
Where never guest might dare molest
Unwelcome or forbidden.
I'd take the jokes of other folks,
And mine should then succeed 'em;
'Nor would I chide a little pride,
Nor heed a little freedom.

With Wordsworth every verse was a brick in the temple his life was building; he would have thought it profanation to despatch an ephemeral jingling joke by post and keep no record. Consequently we have no example of verse

from him inspired by the humour of the moment, written on a subject not poetical. But take Sir Walter Scott's correspondence with James Ballantyne as a specimen of what we mean; he suits as an early example, for very rarely are rhymes strung together as he strung them, literally for only one ear, or indeed only for his own; so heartily careless of his poetical credit. Though not poetry, what a great deal these jingling lines tell us of a poet; how they let us into the character and feeling of the man; how much there is that he would not, and perhaps could not, have unveiled in prose! It is through such effusions that we learn something of him as author, about which he was so reticent. After finishing "Paul's Letters to his Kinsfolk," on whose name he plays somewhat carelessly, we see the "Antiquary" in his mind's eye:—

Dear James — I'm done, thank God, with the long yarns

Of the most prosy of apostles — Paul;
And now advance, sweet heathen of Monk-
barns,

Step out, old quiz, as fast as I can scrawl.

In simple prose he would never have betrayed this confidence and fondness for any creature of his imagination. He thus rejoices over the completion of "Rob Roy":—

With great joy

I send you Roy;

'Twas a tough job,

But we're done with Rob;

the "tough job," referring to the agonies of cramp and the lassitude of opium under which the novel was written. He was the most patient of men under interruption; only in verse does he indulge in a murmur, his temper really worn to a hair's breadth:—

Oh James, oh James, two Irish dames

Oppress me very sore:

I groaning send one sheet I've penn'd,

For, hang them, there's no more.

In momentary discouragement, when "Quentin Durward" did not go off at the rate anticipated, "he did not sink under the short-lived frown," but consoled himself with a couplet—

The mouse who only trusts to one poor hole,
Can never be a mouse of any soul.

When overwhelmed with books, preparatory to his life of Buonaparte, he thus condenses his experience, and blesses himself in prospect of his gigantic task:—

When with poetry dealing,
Room enough in a shieling,
Neither cabin nor hovel
Too small for a novel;
Though my back I should rub
On Diogenes' tub,
How my fancy could prance
In a dance of romance;
But my house I must swap
With some Brobdingnag chap,
Ere I grapple, God bless me, with Emperor
Nap.

When adversity came, the slipshod muse was his confidant, the depository of his resolutions, cheering him onward in the untried stony path of authorship under compulsion,—the inexorable demand of duty. After soliloquies which would have done credit, both in matter and manner, to Shakespeare's fallen kings, we find him writing—

I have finished my task this morning at half-past eleven, easily, early, and I think not amiss. I hope J. B. will make some notes of admiration!!! otherwise I shall be disappointed. If this work answers—if it *but* answers, it must set us on our legs; I am sure worse trumpery of mine has had a great run. I remember with what great difficulty I was brought to think myself anything better than common, and now I will not in mere faintness of heart give up hope. So hey for a Swiftianism—

I loll in my chair
And around me I stare,
With a critical air,
Like a calf in a fair;
And, say I, Mrs. Duty,
Good-morrow to your beauty,
I kiss your sweet shoe-tie,
And hope I can suit ye.

Fair words butter no parsnips, says Duty: don't keep talking then, but go to your work again; there's a day's task before you—the siege of Toulon. Call you that a task? hang me, I'll write it as fast as Bopy carried it on!—

And long ere dinner time I have
Full eight close pages wrote;
What, Duty, hast thou now to crave?
Well done, Sir Walter Scott.

These dialogues with his conscience could hardly have been recorded without the playful veil of verse to hide their deep seriousness of self-sacrifice and atonement. Who can grudge him his escape to the country from the uncongenial scene of them celebrated in these valedictory lines?—

So good-bye, Mrs. Brown,
I am going out of town,
Over dale, over down,
Where bugs bite not,
Where lodgers fight not,
Where below you chairmen drink not,
Where beside you gutters stink not;

But all is fresh, and clear, and gay,
And merry lambkins sport and play.

Scott wrote too easily to value himself on his gifts, or to be very sensitive to criticism. The poet jealous of his reputation, fastidious on his own account, or keenly hurt by adverse opinion, would never commit himself thus, even to the privacy of his diary, secured by lock and key. It thus illustrates a very marked characteristic. We can hardly fancy Waller, who, somebody said, spent a whole summer in correcting ten lines — those written in the Tasso of the Duchess of York — disporting himself in this way.

Scott here is addressing himself. The poet playing with his gift more commonly adopts the epistolary form, and compliments a friend with some facile careless specimen of his art. We do not want the amusement to become general out of the charmed circle; but where once a name is won, a tribute of verse is felt to be a real token of friendship, and treasured among the most flattering of compliments, as a private communication from Parnassus; especially when it illuminates some grave subject, or assumes an unexpected form, in which the poet selects you as the recipient of a new and choice conceit.

It must have been a delightful discovery to the diplomatist when Canning's Despatch first unfolded itself to eye and ear. And that Canning was a universal genius does not prevent the writer of the Anti-Jacobin and the famous Pitt lyric, "The Pilot that Weathered the Storm," being a poet in especial. Canning's general principle, it should be explained, was, that commerce flourished best when wholly unfettered by restrictions; but as modern nations had grown up under various systems, he judged it necessary to discriminate in the application of the principle; hence the Reciprocity Act placing the ships of foreign States importing articles into Great Britain on the same footing of duties as British ships, provided our ships were treated by the same rule in their turn; reserving, however, a retaliative power of imposing increased duties when the principle was resisted or evaded, as it was in the case of Holland — M. Falck, the Dutch Minister, having made a one-sided proposition, much to the advantage of his own country. A tedious negotiation dragging on from month to month ensued, without arriving one step nearer consummation; at last Canning's patience was exhausted. Sir Charles Bagot, our ambassador at the

Hague, was one day (as we are told) attending at Court when a despatch in cipher was hastily put into his hand; it was very short, and evidently very urgent, but unfortunately Sir Charles, not expecting such a communication, had not the key of the cipher with him. An interval of intense anxiety followed, until he could obtain the key, when, to his infinite astonishment, he deciphered the following despatch from the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs: —

In matters of commerce, the fault of the Dutch
Is giving too little and asking too much;
With equal advantage the French are content,
So we'll clap on Dutch bottoms a twenty per cent.

Twenty per cent.,

Twenty per cent.,

Nous frapperons Falck with twenty per cent.

GEORGE CANNING.

Tom Moore, subsequently meeting this M. Falck when ambassador at our Court, calls him a fine sensible Dutchman. Whether he ever knew the form in which the tables were turned upon him is nowhere stated. Surprise constitutes some of the fun and attraction of a very different rhymed letter, where Cowper fills a sheet — prose alike in aspect and matter — with a flow of the most ingenious and facile rhymes. It shows remarkable mastery over words; and the little turns of humour, the playing with his own serious aims and with his friend's gravity of calling and reputation, are pleasantly characteristic of the man. The letter is long, but does not admit of curtailment, and the lurking rhymes keep up the reader's vigilance and attention.

July 12, 1781.

To the Rev. JOHN NEWTON.

MY VERY DEAR FRIEND, — I am going to send, what when you have read, you may scratch your head, and say I suppose, there's nobody knows whether what I have got, be verse or not: by the tune and the time, it ought to be rhyme; but if it be, did you ever see, of late or of yore, such a ditty before? The thought did occur to me and to her, as Madam and I, did walk and not fly, over hills and dales, with spreading sails, before it was dark to Weston Park.

The news at *Oney* is little or none, but such as it is, I send it — viz., poor Mr. Peace cannot yet cease, addling his head with what you have said, and has left Parish Church quite in the lurch, having almost sworn, to go there no more.

Page and his wife, that made such a strife, we met them twain, in Dog Lane; we gave them the wall, and that was all. For Mr. Scott, we have seen him not, except as he

pass'd in a wonderful haste, to see a friend, in Silver End. Mrs. Jones proposes, ere July closes, that she and her sister and her Jones Mister, and we that are here, our course shall steer, to dine in the Spinney; but for a guinea, if the weather should hold, so hot and so cold, we had better by far, stay where we are. For the grass there grows, while nobody mows, (which is very wrong), so rank and long, that so to speak, 'tis at least a week, if it happens to rain, ere it dries again.

I have writ "Charity," not for popularity, but as well as I could, in hopes to do good; and if the Reviewer should say, "To be sure, the gentleman's muse wears Methodist shoes; you may know by her pace, and talk about grace, that she and her bard have little regard, for the taste and fashions and ruling passions, and hoidening play of the modern day; and though she assume a borrowed plume, and now and then wear a tittering air, 'tis only her plan, to catch if she can, the giddy and gay, as they go that way, by a production on a new construction. She has baited her trap, in hopes to snap all that may come, with a sugar-plum." His opinion in this, will not be amiss; 'tis what I intend, my principal end: and if I succeed, and folks should read, till a few are brought to a serious thought, I shall think I am paid, for all I have said, and all I have done, though I have run, many a time, after a rhyme, as far as from hence, to the end of my sense, and by hook or crook, write another book, if I live and am here, another year.

I have heard before, of a room with a floor, laid upon springs, or suchlike things, with so much art in every part, that when you went in, you were forced to begin a minuet pace with an air and a grace, swimming about, now in now out, with a deal of state, in a figure of eight, without pipe or string, or any such thing; and now I have writ, in a rhyming fit, what will make you dance, and as you advance, will keep you still, though against your will, dancing away, alert and gay, till you come to an end, of what I have penn'd; which that you may do, ere Madam and you are quite worn out, with jigging about, I take my leave, and here you receive, bow profound, down to the ground, from your humble me, W. C.

P. S. — When I concluded, doubtless you did think me right, as well you might, in saying what I said of Scott; and then it was true, but now it is due, to him to note, that since I wrote, himself and he has visited we.

This was written in a poetical year, when verse and matter crowded upon him. After finishing "Table Talk," we find him resolving to hang up his harp for the remainder of the year, and —

Since eighty-one has had so much to do,
Postpone what yet is left for eighty-two.

Charles Lamb and Cowper are as little associated in our minds as poets can well be; but there were points, especial-

ly of temperament, in common, and the Muse was a handmaid to them both; they each liked to adapt her to domestic uses. Cowper acknowledged homely favours by giving a verse for a dish of fish, apostrophizing a halibut in high-sounding blank verse, and explaining in neatly-turned heroics how the barrel of oysters was delayed on the road by the imprudent kindness of paying the carriage beforehand. Charles Lamb asked a favour through the same medium: —

TO WILLIAM AYRTON, Esq.

My dear friend,

Before I end

Have you any

More orders for Don Giovanni

To give

Him that doth live

Your faithful Zany?

Without raillery

I mean Gallery

Ones;

For I am a person that shuns

All ostentation,

And being at the top of the fashion,

And seldom go to operas

But in *formâ pauperis*.

I go to the play

In a very economical sort of a way,

Rather to see

Than be seen,

Though I am no ill sight

Neither

By candle light

And in some kinds of weather.

You might pit me

For height

Against Kean;

But in a grand tragic scene

I'm nothing;

It would create a kind of loathing

To see me act Hamlet;

There'd be many a damn let

Fly

At my presumption

If I should try,

Being a fellow of no gumption.

By the way, tell me candidly how you relish

This which they call

The lapidary style?

Opinions vary.

The late Mr. Mellish

Could never abide it;

He thought it vile

And coxcombical.

My friend the poet-laureate,

Who is a great lawyer at

Anything comical,

Was the first who tried it;

But Mellish could never abide it:

But it signifies very little what Mellish said,
Because he is dead.

&c. &c.

It does not seem, by the way, to have been Southey's turn, however much he played with fantastic measures, to versify for the amusement of his friends alone. All his composition—even his fun—had its destination for the press; but we find him slipping into rhythm to his friend Bedford:—

How mortifying is this confinement of yours! I had planned so many pleasant walks to be made so much more pleasant by conversation;

For I have much to tell thee, much to say
Of the odd things we saw upon our journey—
Much of the dirt and vermin that annoyed us.

Charles Lamb was never careless or rapid. It was his amusement to play with his thoughts. The labour of investing a quaint fancy in fit wording was his pleasure. As in many other sports, the fun lay in the dressing. In fact, all that was characteristic in his mind needed exact expression; and now and then verse comes in to give the last point, as, after denouncing a cold spring, and May chilled by east winds, he concludes—

Unmeaning joy around appears,
And Nature smiles as though she sneers.

In complete contrast to this is the rapidity of Scott's habits of composition. His domestic verse has all the air of extempore. He seems to have considered it a duty to his chief to retain the minstrel character in his letters. In them he liked to exercise his pen in unfamiliar measures, proving how easy they all were to him. Canning had told him that if he liked he could emulate Dryden in heroics, his letter from Zetland beginning—

Health to the chieftain from his clansman true;
From her true minstrel health to fair Buccleugh—
Health from the isles where dewy Morning weaves
Her chaplet with the tints that Twilight leaves—

is a very happy experiment in them; but his account of the sea-serpent in dancing anapaests better suits our purpose, as bearing also upon the late reappearance of that tantalizing fable. He writes from Kirkwall—

We have now got to Kirkwall, and needs I
must stare
When I think that in verse I have once called
it fair.

He dates August the 13th, 1814.

In respect that your Grace has commissioned
a Kraken,

You will please be informed that they seldom
are taken;

It is January two years, the Zetland folks say,
Since they saw the last Kraken in Scalloway Bay,

He lay in the offing a fortnight or more,
But the devil a Zetlander put from the shore,
Though bold in the seas of the North to
assail

The morse and the sea-horse, the grampus
and whale.

If your Grace thinks I'm writing the thing
that is not,

You may ask at a namesake of ours—Mr.
Scott

(He's not from our clan, though his merits de-
serve it;

He springs, I'm informed, from the Scotts of
Scotstarvit);

He questioned the folks who beheld it with
eyes,

But they differed confoundedly as to its size.

For instance, the modest and diffident swore
That it seemed like the keel of a ship, and no
more;

Those of eyesight more clear, or of fancy
more high,

Said it rose like an island 'twixt ocean and
sky—

But all of the hulk had a steady opinion,
That 'twas sure a *live* subject of Neptune's
dominion;

And I think, my Lord Duke, your Grace
hardly would wish

To cumber your house such a kettle of fish.

&c. &c.

Verse in such easy hands is a very useful instrument for turning a disagreeable incident into a joke, the poet can be imperious in it without giving offence, apologetic without meanness or servility. Thus in Lockhart's unlucky false quantity which made such a stir over Maida's grave. James Ballantyne had run off post-haste with the epitaph thinking it Scott's, and printed it with an additional blunder of his own. All the newspapers twitted the supposed author, and Lockhart properly desired that the blame should lie on the right shoulders. Scott, however, cared much more for the reputation of his son-in-law, the author of "Valerius," than his own, and rattled off an epistle to Lockhart with many reasons for letting the matter rest, of which the third is—

Don't you perceive that I don't care a boddle,
Although fifty false metres were flung at my
noddle;

For my back is as broad and as hard as Ben-
lomon's,

And I treat as I please both the Greeks and
the Romans;

And fourthly and lastly, it is my good pleasure
To remain the sole source of that murderous
measure.

So *stec pro ratione voluntas* — be tractile,
Invade not, I say, my own dear little dactyl;
If you do, you'll occasion a break in our in-
tercourse.

To-morrow will see me in town for the winter
course,

But not at your door at the usual hour, sir,
My own pye-house daughter's good prog to
devour, sir;

Ergo — peace, on your duty, your squeamish-
ness throttle,

And we'll soothe Priscian's spleen with a
canny third bottle;

A fig for all dactyls, a fig for all spondeeas,
A fig for all dunces and Dominie Grundys.

&c. &c.

We do not often catch him taking the high line about himself that really lies hidden under this disparagement of his scholarship. Tom Moore has recourse to the epistolary Muse under a very different mortification; though there may be many tingling sensations after giving a bad dinner near akin to the discovery of being even party to a false quantity. The man in both cases feels lowered, and has to give himself a filip to reinstate himself in his own good opinion. The dinner in question seems to have been an utter breakdown; and where Luttrell and brother epicureans were the guests, all can sympathize in the mishap; while it is only given to poets to express in becoming terms a consciousness of disaster. Prose apologies in such cases are heavy aggravations of the original ill-usage. Moore sitting down after seeing his guests off, aided by his lantern, and soothing his spirits by an imitation of Horace, might be glad he was a poet; for what trouble does not in a degree dissipate itself under neat definition?

That bard had brow of brass, I own,

Who first presumed, the hardened sinner,
To ask fine gentlemen from town

To come and eat a wretched dinner;

Who feared not leveret, black as soot,

Like roasted Afric at the head set,

And making towards the duck at foot,

The veteran duck, a sort of dead set;

Whose nose could stand such ancient fish

As that we at Devizes purvey —

Than which I know no likelier dish

To turn one's stomach topsy-turvy.

&c. &c.

Luttrell himself could turn a verse, and was no doubt recompensed in some degree by the opportunity afforded for airing his talent, owning indeed that

"your cook was no dab at her duty," but making the answering line "end with poetry, friendship, and beauty."

And then to increase our delight

To a fulness all boundaries scorning,

We were cheered by your lantern at night,

And regaled with your rhymes the next morning.

We must go back to an earlier date to find dinners a cheerful subject for the poet's muse. When a couple of dishes furnished a table to which it was not unbecoming to invite a lord, Matthew Prior could gaily extemporize an invitation to Harley; with no fears of a *contretemps* when a joint of mutton and a ham supplied the board: —

AN EXTEMPORE INVITATION TO THE EARL OF
OXFORD, HIGH TREASURER, 1712.

My Lord, —

Our weekly friends to-morrow meet

At Matthew's palace in Duke Street,

To try, for once, if they can dine

On bacon-ham and mutton-chine.

If, wearied with the great affairs

Which Britain trusts to Harley's cares,

Thou, humble statesman, may'st descend

Thy mind one moment to unbend,

To see thy servant from his soul

Crown with thy health the sprightly bowl;

Among the guests which e'er my house

Received, it never can produce

Of honour a more glorious proof —

Though Dorset used to bless the roof.

And when Gay versified the receipt for stewed veal, we may take for granted that the dish so glorified would not be lost in a crowd of rival candidates for favour, but was, no doubt, a crowning attraction of the occasion. "As we cannot enjoy anything good without your partaking of it," he writes to Swift, "accept of the following receipt for stewed veal: —"

The receipt of the veal of Monsieur Davaux, Mr. Pulteney's cook, and it hath been approved of at one of our Twickenham entertainments. The difficulty of the saucepan I believe you will find is owing to a negligence in perusing the manuscript. If I remember right, it is there called a stew-pan. Your earthen vessel, provided it is close-topped, I allow to be a good *succedaneum*: —

Take a knuckle of veal —

You may buy it, or steal;

In a few pieces cut it,

In a stewing-pan put it.

Salt, pepper, and mace

Must season this knuckle;

Than what's joined to a place*

With other herbs muckle,

That which killed King Will,†

* *Vulgo* salary.

† Supposed sorrel.

And what never * stands still ;
 Some sprigs of that bed
 Where children are bred ; —
 Which much you will mend if
 Both spinnage and endive,
 And lettuce and beet,
 With marygold meet, —
 Put no water at all,
 For it maketh things small ;
 Which, lest it should happen,
 A close cover cap on.
 Put this pot of Wood's metal †
 In a hot boiling kettle,
 And there let it be
 (Mark the doctrine I teach)
 About — let me see —
 Thrice as long as you preach. ‡
 So, skimming the fat off,
 Say grace with your hat off.
 Oh, then with what rapture
 Will it fill dean and chapter !

The mention of Twickenham, where Swift was so keenly missed, reminds us of Pope's lines suggested by the vexed question of his descent. Swift in Ireland was contented to be called an Irishman ; but the monument he put up to his grandfather in Goodrich (or Gotheridge) Church, to which he also presented a cup, implies, as Pope also took it, a desire to assert his English origin. He had sent a pencilled elevation of the tablet to Mrs. Howard, who returned it with these lines on it scribbled by Pope. The paper was found endorsed in Swift's hand, "Model of a monument to my grandfather, with Mr. Pope's roguery : " —

Jonathan Swift
 Had the gift
 By fatheridge, motheridge,
 And by brotheridge,
 To come from Gotheridge,
 But now is spoil'd clean
 And an Irish dean.
 In this church he has put
 A stone of two foot ;
 With a cup and a can, sir,
 In respect to his grandsire.
 So Ireland change thy tone,
 And cry O hone, O hone !
 For England hath its own.

Swift is rarely spoken of in these days but as a misanthrope, abhorring as well as despising his fellow-creatures. Misanthrope as he might be towards parties and people he did not like or did not know, he could not live without friends, who were more necessary to him than they are to many philanthropists, and more constantly in his mind for their amusement and his own ; and trusting, no doubt, to their immense opinion of his genius, he delighted,

* Thyme or time.

† Copper. The allusion is to Wood, the coiner of Irish halfpence, who furnished the text of the Drapier Letters.

‡ " Which we suppose to be near four hours."

among other uses of the "Little Language," in stringing together, in a sort of horse-play, jingling rhymes and interminable lines, in bold defiance of metrical rule, like the following, — certainly never designed for the public eye, though they found their way to it : —

SWIFT'S AND HIS THREE FRIENDS' INVITATION TO DR. SHERIDAN.

Dear Tom, this verse, which, however the beginning may appear, yet in the *end's good metre*,

Is sent to desire that, when your *august* vacation comes, your *friends you'd meet here* ;
 For why should stay you in that filthy hole —
 I mean the *city so smoaky* —

When you have not one friend left in town, or
 at least *no one that's witty to joke wi' ye* ?

How he served his friends is shown, in one instance, by Gay's acknowledgments, who attributes to his good offices his appointment to attend Lord Clarendon to the House in capacity of secretary. "I am every day," he writes, "attending my Lord Treasurer for his bounty to help me out, which he hath promised me upon the following petition, which I have sent him by Dr. Arbuthnot : —"

THE EPIGRAMMATICAL PETITION OF JOHN GAY.

I'm no more to converse with the swains,
 But go where fine people resort.
 One can live without money on plains,
 But never without it at court.
 If, when with the swains I did gambol,
 I arrayed me in silver and blue,
 When abroad and in courts I shall ramble,
 Pray, my lord, how much money will do ?

Instead of the terrors of a competitive examination, his wardrobe was obviously Gay's first care on entering the public service : for subdivision of labour is a modern idea. A genius or a clever fellow used to be considered fit, and to hold himself fit, at a moment's warning, for any employment that would bring him an income. A place or an appointment, whatever the duties, was an appropriate recognition of any form of merit or success. Scarcely more than half a century ago, Theodore Hook was made accountant-general to the Mauritius, and treasurer to the colony, for rattling off such verses as these in ridicule of the tag-rag deputations to Queen Caroline : —

A rout of sham sailors
 Escaped from their jailors,
 As sea-bred as tailors
 In Shropshire or Wilts,
 And Mark Oldi's smile, and her's,

Greeting as Highlanders,
Half a score Mile-enders
Shivering in kilts.

It was a fit sequel to such a choice that the luckless treasurer, having got the money affairs of the island into inextricable confusion, was brought back in disgrace, entertaining his custodians, and amusing the tedium of the voyage by extemporizing songs, of which himself and his own predicament was the theme, and denouncing

The atrocious, pernicious
Scoundrel that emptied the till at Mauritius.

But we are digressing, and must not leave the elder generation without one specimen, gathered from his letters, of Swift's graver epistolary style, addressed to the honoured friend who was emphatically the poet of the brilliant circle. It is an example of his delightfully easy versification, so peculiarly adapted for familiar uses : —

DR. SWIFT TO MR. POPE,

While he was writing the "Dunciad."

Pope has the talent well to speak,
But not to reach the ear ;
His loudest voice is low and weak,
The Dean too deaf to hear.

A while they on each other look,
Then different studies chuse ;
The Dean sits plodding on a book —
Pope walks and courts the muse.

Now backs of letters, though design'd
For those who more will need 'em,
Are filled with hints, and interlined,
Himself can hardly read 'em.

Each atom by some other struck,
All turns and motions tries ;
Till in a lump together stuck,
Behold a poem rise !

Yet to the Dean his share allot ;
He claims it by a canon ;
*That without which a thing is not,
Is causa sine quâ non.*

Thus, Pope, in vain you boast your wit ;
For, had our deaf divine
Been for your conversation fit,
You had not writ a line.

Of prelate thus for preaching fam'd
'The sexton reason'd well ;
And justly half the merit claim'd
Because he rang the bell.

Amongst epistolary effusions, Gray's lines to Mason must find a place. Whether Mason had any idea of editing Shakespeare we cannot now remember, but doubtless Gray had been irritated by

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a good deal of the criticism laboriously bestowed on the poet by his numerous commentators, and thus expressed his opinion of their value : —

TO THE REV. WILLIAM MASON.

July 16, 1763.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE to MRS. ANNE,
regular servant to the Rev. Mr. Precentor of York.

A moment's patience, gentle Mistress Anne :
(But stint your clack for sweet St. Charitie) :
'Tis Willey begs, once a right proper man,
Though now a book, and interleaf'd, you see.

Much have I borne from canker'd critic's spite,
From fumbling baronets, and poets small,
Pert barristers, and parsons nothing bright ;
But what awaits me now is worst of all.

'Tis true our Master's temper natural
Was fashion'd fair in meek and dove-like guise ;
But may not honey's self be turned to gall
By residence, by marriage, and sore eyes ?

If then he wreak on me his wicked will,
Steal to his closet at the hour of prayer ;
And (then thou hear'st the organ piping shrill),
Grease his best pen, and all he scribbles tear.

Better to bottom tarts and cheesecakes nice,
Better the roast meat from the fire to save,
Better be twisted into caps for spice
Than thus be patched and cobbled in one's grave.

So York shall taste what Clouet never knew,
So from our works sublimer fumes shall rise ;
While Nancy earns the praise to Shakespeare due,
For glorious puddings and immortal pies.

"Tell me, if you do not like this," writes Gray, "and I will send you a worse." We think them good lines to find their home only in a letter ; and Gray had no eye beyond his correspondent : and so thought Mason, who writes answer, "As bad as your verses were, they are yours, and therefore, when I get back to York, I will paste them carefully in the first page of my Shakespeare, for I intend it to be put in my marriage settlement, as a provision for my younger daughters."

Editors have been often provocatives of verse. Tom Moore has his thoughts on editors, though on different grounds, but mingled in his case also with good cheer. The following querulous effusion fails to distinguish between the private, the social, and the public duties of the critic. "I see my Lord Edward," he writes, "announced as one of the articles

in the 'Quarterly,' to be abused, of course ; and this so immediately after my dinings and junketings with both editor and publisher." Having occasion to write to Murray, he sent him the following squib :—

THOUGHTS ON EDITORS.

Editor et Edit.

No, editors don't care a button

What false and faithless things they do ;
They'll let you come and cut their mutton,
And then they'll have a cut at you.

With Barns I oft my dinner took,
Nay, met ev'n Horace Twiss to please him ;
Yet Mister Barnes traduced my book,
For which may his own devils seize him !

With Doctor Bowring I drank tea,
Nor of his cakes consumed a particle ;
And yet th' ungrateful L.L.D.
Let fly at me next week an article.

John Wilson gave me suppers hot,
With bards of fame like Hogg and Pack-
wood ;
A dose of black strap then I got,
And after a still worse of "Blackwood !"

Alas ! and must I close the list
With thee, my Lockhart, of the "Quar-
terly !"
So kind, with bumper in thy fist —
With pen, so *very* gruff and tartly.

Now in thy parlour feasting me,
Now scribbling at me from thy garret,
Till 'twixt the two in doubt I be
Which sourest is, thy wit or claret.

Byron never made verse his plaything. Even where it affected to be, it was a weapon which would have altogether failed of its purpose if it did not find its way and hit far beyond its seeming destination. Self-banished, he felt his exclusion from the intellects of the day, and sought for some medium of communication with them which should not compromise his pride. This medium was his distinguished publisher, at whose house his restless fancy imagined constant gatherings of wits and poets. To them he sent messages, as it were, to keep his name and fame still in men's mouths — and the fear of him, an abiding influence. Mr. Murray was thus the depositary of some lively *critiques* on men and books, as where Byron supplies him with a civil refusal of the "Medical Tragedy" (Dr. Polidori's), spoken in his (Murray's) own person. We give it as so far to our point that it is verse applied to a personal use, and affecting to be thrown off for the amusement of his correspond-
ent :—

There's Byron too, who once did better,
Has sent me folded in a letter
A sort of — it's no more a drama
Than Darnley, Ivan, or Kehama ;
So altered since last year his pen is,
I think he's lost his wits at Venice.
. . . But, to resume :
As I was saying, sir, the room —
The room's so full of wits and bards,
Crabbes, Campbells, Crokers, Freres, and
Wards,
And others, neither bards nor wits.
My humble tenement admits
All persons in the dress of gent,
From Mr. Hammond to Dog Dent ;
A party dines with me to-day,
All clever men who make their way ;
They're at this moment in discussion
On poor De Stael's late dissolution ;
Her book they say was in advance,
Pray Heaven she tell the truth of France ;
Thus run our time and tongues away —
But to return, sir, to your play, &c., &c.

His publisher's name suggests other verses in a more genuinely playful vein, as well as more for the individual recipient. He felt Murray the link between him and his country, as apart from a few personal intimacies. His mind, we see, ran on the scene where his name was spoken and his works inquired after. He liked to recall "the table's baize so green," the comings and goings, the literary gossip, and all that was most opposed to the line he had chosen for himself. It associated him with poets, not only of the day, but of the earlier times :—

Strahan, Jonson, Lintot of the times,
Patron and publisher of rhymes,
To thee the bard up Pindus climbs,
My Murray.

To thee with hope and terror dumb
The unfledged MS. authors come ;
Thou printest all — and sellest some —
My Murray.

Upon thy table's baize so green
The last new Quarterly is seen,
But where is thy new Magazine
My Murray ?

Along thy sprucest book-shelves shine
The works thou deemest most divine —
The "Art of Cookery" and mine,
My Murray.

Tours, travels, essays, too, I wist,
And sermons to thy mill bring grist !
And then thou hast thy "Navy List,"
My Murray.

And Heaven forbid I should conclude
Without the Board of Longitude,
Although this narrow paper would,
My Murray.

Complimentary verses, if premeditated, scarcely come within our subject. Playful they may be, but no style of composition has more severely tasked the faculties of versifiers, or been less congenial to the poet proper. We mean, of course, social verse; for addresses and dedications, profuse of compliment, swell the pages to a very inconvenient extent, of generations of poets. One exception, however, we must make to our exclusion of this vehicle for forced liveliness. What more easy and playful lines can we find than the following, or more suggestive of fun and enjoyment in the writer? and if any question the choice of subject, let them remember the argument of the "Splendid Shilling"—

Sing, heavenly muse!
Things unattempted yet in prose or rhyme,—
A shilling, breeches, and chimeras dire.

These lines were addressed to Mrs. Legh on her wedding-day, in reference to a present of a pair of shooting-breeches she had made to Canning while he was a Christ Church undergraduate:—

TO MRS. LEGH.

While all to this auspicious day,
Well pleased, their heartfelt homage pay,
And sweetly smile, and softly say
A hundred civil speeches;
My muse shall strike her tuneful strings,
Nor scorn the gift her duty brings,
Tho' humble be the theme she sings,—
A pair of shooting-breeches.

Soon shall the tailor's subtle art
Have made them tight, and spruce, and smart,
And fastened well in every part
With twenty thousand stitches;
Mark, then, the moral of my song;
Oh, may your loves but prove as strong,
And wear as well, and last as long,
As these my shooting-breeches!

And when, to ease the load of life,
Of private care, and public strife,
My lot shall give to me a wife,
I ask not rank or riches;
For worth like thine alone I pray,
Temper like thine, serene and gay,
And formed, like thine, to give away,
Not wear herself, the breeches.

No man that has much in him can write to amuse himself in ever so easy a vein, without telling something that will convey information a hundred years or so after. Take, for example, Cowper's song on the History of a Walk in the Mud. What a picture it raises of the roads and paths of his day! Often it occurs to the reader to speculate on the use that is made of gardens in literature of a former date. How constantly Pepys, *e.g.*, "walks up and down," in discussion! what provision was made for this exercise in all old gardens! A terrace, we see, was no affair of mere state, it was a

necessity of health; for if people walk for exercise in narrow bounds, it must be on a straight line, not one winding and turning. A country walk was an adventure for ladies in those days. Witness the immense preparations when the Duchess of Portland on first succeeding to Welbeck wished to walk to Creswell Crag, two miles and a half from the great house. The ladies were accompanied by the steward to show them the way, and two pioneers to level all before them. Paths were cut through thickets and brambles, and bridges made for swampy places. It was an expedition to be proud of. Walking was necessary to Cowper, and a lady companion equally necessary; hence the point he makes of having leave to walk in the Throckmortons' grounds. It is really sad to read (February 1785), "Of all the winters we have passed at Olney, this, the seventeenth, has confined us most. Thrice, and but thrice, since the middle of October, have we escaped into the fields for a little fresh air and a little change of motion. The last time it was at some peril we did it, Mrs. Unwin having slipt into a ditch; and, though I performed the part of an active squire upon the occasion, escaped out of it upon her hands and knees." The occasion of the following composition was four years earlier, the Sister Anne addressed at the close being Lady Austen:—

THE DISTRESSED TRAVELLERS, OR LABOUR IN VAIN.

An excellent new song, to a tune never sung before.

I.

I sing of a journey to Clifton,
We would have performed if we could,
Without cart or barrow to lift on
Poor Mary and me through the mud
Slee sla slud,
Stuck in the mud;
O it is pretty to wade through a flood!

2.

So away we went, slipping and sliding
Hop, hop, *à la mode de deux* frogs.
'Tis near as good walking as riding,
When ladies are dressed in their clogs.
Wheels no doubt,
Go briskly about,
But they clatter and rattle, and make such a rout!

3.

She.

Well! now I protest it is charming;
How finely the weather improves!

That cloud, though, is rather alarming ;
How slowly and stately it moves !

He.

Pshaw ! never mind ;
'Tis not in the wind ;
We are travelling south, and shall leave it be-
hind.

4.

She.

I am glad we are come for an airing,
For folks may be pounded and penn'd
Until they grow rusty, not caring
To stir half a mile to an end.

He.

The longer we stay
The longer we may ;
It's a folly to think about weather or way.

5.

She.

But now I begin to be frighted
If I fall, what a way I should roll !
I am glad that the bridge was indicted, —
Stop ! stop ! I am sunk in a hole !

He.

Nay, never care !
'Tis a common affair ;
You'll not be the last that will set a foot there.

6.

She.

Let me breathe now a little, and ponder
On what it were better to do ;
That terrible lane I see yonder,
I think we shall never get through !

He.

So think I ;
But, by the by,
We never shall know if we never should try.

7.

She.

But, should we get there, how shall we get
home ?
What a terrible deal of bad road we have
passed !
Slipping and sliding ; and if we should come
To a difficult stile, I am ruin'd at last.
Oh, this lane ;
Now it is plain
That struggling and striving is labour in vain.

8.

He.

Stick fast there while I go and look.

She.

Don't go away, for fear I should fall !

He.

I have examined in every nook,
And what you have here is a sample of all.
Come, wheel round ;

The dirt we have found
Would be worth an estate, at a farthing a
pound.

9.

Now, sister Anne, the guitar you must take ;
Set it, and sing it, and make it a song.
I have varied the verse for variety's sake,
And cut it off short, because it was long.

'Tis hobbling and lame,
Which critics won't blame,
For the sense and the sound, they say, should
be the same.

Southey calls this one of the play-
fullest and most characteristic of his pieces.
We are glad to have a poet's testimony
to its merits. It is a remarkable exam-
ple of Cowper's special power of pictu-
resquely reproducing a scene, incident, or
situation ; and by touches minutely true,
playing with the trivialities of life as an
exercise of his apt and choice resources
of language. The editors have probably
thought the subject too trivial, for it has
been "overlooked" in every edition of
his poems that we know of. There is a
poem of Coleridge's which comes under
our class, having been clearly written with
friends only in view ; but as it is insert-
ed in his works, we will only indicate it
by a few lines. It is that Ode to the
Rain, composed in bed on the morning
appointed for the departure of a very
worthy but not very pleasant visitor,
whom it was feared the rain might de-
tain : —

But only now, for this one day,
Do go, dear Rain, do go away !
O Rain ! with your dull twofold sound,
The clash hard by, and the murmur all round !
You know, if you know aught, that we
Both night and day but ill agree.
For days, and months, and almost years
Have limped on through this vale of tears,
Since body of mine and rainy weather
Have lived on easy terms together.
Yet if, as soon as it is light,
O Rain ! you will but take your flight,
Though you should come again to-morrow,
And bring with you both pain and sorrow ;
Though stomach should sicken and knees
should swell,
I'll nothing speak of you but well,
But only now, for this one day,
Do go, dear Rain, do go away !

Of all the intellectual gifts bestowed
on man, the most intoxicating is readi-
ness — the power of calling all the re-
sources of the mind into simultaneous
action at a moment's notice. Nothing
strikes the unready as so miraculous as
this promptitude in others ; nothing im-
presses him with so dull and envious

a sense of contrast in his own person. To want readiness is to be laid on the shelf, to creep where others fly, to fall into permanent discouragement. To be ready is to have the mind's intellectual property put out at fifty or a hundred per cent.; to be unready at the moment of trial, is to be dimly conscious of faculties tied up somewhere in a napkin. What an engine—we are speaking of “the commerce of mankind”—is a memory ready with its stores at the first question, words that come at your call, thoughts that follow in unbroken sequence, reason quick at retort! The thoughts we may feel not above our level; the words we could arrange in as harmonious order; the memory, only give it time, does not fail us; the repartee is all the occasion called for, if only it had not suggested itself too late, thus changing its nature from a triumph into a regret. It is such comparisons, the painful recollection of panic and disaster, the speech that would not be spoken, the reply that dissolved into incoherence, the action that belied our intention, or, it may be, experience in a humbler field, that gives to readiness such a charm and value. The ready man does seem such a very clever fellow. The poet's readiness does not avail him for such practical uses, and does not contribute to his fame or success at all in the same degree. It is the result—the thought, the wit, the sense—not the speed of performance, which determines the worth of his efforts. But we delight in an extempore effusion because of the prestige of readiness called into play in busy life; at least this adds to the pleasure. The poet's best verses are the greatest, least imitable, wonder about him; but we are apt to be most surprised when he shows his powers under immediate command: and good lines struck off at a heat, do give us a vivid insight into the vivacity and energy of the poetical temperament, prompt in its action, ready at a call, and gaily willing to display its mechanical facilities. There is a specimen of Dryden's fluency in extempore verse, communicated and authenticated by Malone, which shows that foresight and composite action which a strong imagination seems to possess, uttering what it has prepared, and composing what is to follow, at one and the same time—a habit or faculty observed in Sir Walter Scott by his amanuenses. This double action must belong to all rapid complex expression; but the difficulty is enhanced and the feat magnified

in proportion when rhythm and rhyme are added to the other requirements.

Conversation one day after dinner at Mrs. Creed's running upon the origin of names, Mr. Dryden bowed to the good old lady and spoke extempore the following verses:—

So much religion in *your* name doth dwell,
Your soul must needs with piety excel;
Thus names, like [well-wrought] pictures drawn of old,
Their owner's natures and their story told.
Your name but half expresses, for in you
Belief and justice do together go.
My prayers shall be, while this short life endures,
These may go hand in hand with you and yours;
Till faith hereafter is in vision drown'd,
And practice is with endless glory crown'd.

Dr. Johnson, readiness itself in his conversation, has left some remarkable examples of the extemporizing power. Mrs. Thrale relates that she went into his room at Streatham on her birthday and complained, “Nobody sends me verses now, because I am five-and-thirty years old; and Stella was fed with them till forty-six, I remember.” “My having just recovered from illness will account for the manner in which he burst out suddenly; for so he did without the least previous hesitation whatsoever, and without having entertained the smallest intention towards it half a minute before:”—

Of in danger, yet alive,
We are come to thirty-five;
Long may better years arrive,
Better years than thirty-five.
Could philosophers contrive,
Life to stop at thirty-five,
Time his hours should never drive
O'er the bounds of thirty-five.
High to soar, and deep to dive,
Nature gives at thirty-five.
Ladies, stock and tend your hive,
Trifle not at thirty-five;
For howe'er we boast and thrive,
Life declines from thirty-five.
He that ever hopes to thrive
Must begin by thirty-five:
And all who wisely wish to wive,
Must look on Thrale at thirty-five.

And now [said he, as I was writing them down], you may see what it is to come for poetry to a dictionary-maker; you may observe that the rhymes run in alphabetical order exactly,—and so they do.

His extempore parodies are by no means feats like this, which is really a bundle of valuable maxims; but how easily flow the lines to Miss Reynolds, in imitation of the “Penny Ballads,” and how well the rhythm is caught!—

I therefore pray thee, Renny dear,
That thou wilt give to me,
With cream and sugar softened well,
Another dish of tea.

Nor fear that I, my gentle maid,
Shall long detain the cup,

When once unto the bottom I
Have drunk the liquor up.

Yet hear, alas! this mournful truth,
Nor hear it with a frown,
Thou canst not make the tea so fast,
As I can drink it down.

Swift had an "odd humour" of extemporizing rhymed proverbs, which he brought out with such apt readiness as to puzzle collectors of old saws. Thus, a friend showing off his garden to a party of visitors without inviting them to eat any of the fine fruit before them, Swift observed, "It was a saying of my dear grandmother's —

Always pull a peach,
When it is within your reach,"

and helped himself accordingly, an example which, under such revered sanction, the rest of the party were not slow to follow.

The value of all specimens lies a good deal in the assurance of their authenticity as unprepared efforts, sudden plays of humour or ingenuity. The following professes also to be extempore; but there must have been finishing touches, — it surely passes human power to have been hit off in one sustained unbroken flow. That it answers our leading requirement as poet's play work, there can be no doubt. Whitbread, it seems, had perpetrated the unpardonable sin against taste and parliamentary usage, of introducing personal and family matters into his speech on a great public occasion, at a time when party feeling against Lord Melville was carried to a point of savage virulence. It is no wonder his witty friend was inspired by such an opportunity for firing a shot in return.

FRAGMENT OF AN ORATION.

Part of Mr. Whitbread's speech on the trial of Lord Melville, 1805, put into verse by Mr. Canning at the time it was delivered.

I'm like Archimedes for science and skill;
I'm like a young prince going straight up a hill;
I'm like (with respect to the fair be it said),
I'm like a young lady just bringing to bed.
If you ask why the 11th of June I remember
Much better than April, or May, or November,
On that day, my Lords, with truth I assure ye,
My sainted progenitor set up his brewery;
On that day in the morn he began brewing beer;
On that day too commenced his connubial career;
On that day he received and he issued his bills;
On that day he cleared out all his cash in his tills;

On that day he died, having finished his summing,
And the angels all cried, "There's old Whitbread a-coming!"
So that day I still hail with a smile and a sigh,
For his beer with an E, and his bier with an I;
And still on that day in the hottest of weather,
The whole Whitbread family dine altogether.
So long as the beams of this house shall support
The roof which o'ershades this respectable court,
Where Hastings was tried for oppressing the Hindoos;
So long as that sun shall shine in at those windows,
My name shall shine bright as my ancestor's shines;
Mine recorded in journals, his blazoned on signs.

Our examples have been uniformly taken from biographers' collections of letters and private recollections. In only one case have we referred to the poet's "poems" for the specimen in point; though our extract may, in one or two instances, have been removed from its original standing to a niche in what are emphatically called an author's works.

It is obvious, on this and other grounds, that our poets at play can include no living brother within their circle. Poets must first be known and valued by their works. They must have done great things before we care for trifles from their hands. But this knowledge once acquired, and an estimate formed, a further intimacy may be promoted by some acquaintance with performances which do not rank among their works. It would be very unjust to measure them by such specimens as we have strung together; but having established their reputation with us, trivialities, like many of these, if they do not contribute to their fame, yet suggest versatility, and in most cases add an engaging touch of homely nature to a great name. They are all examples, as we began by saying, of that essential element of the poet's nature when in working effective order — exceptional life and spirits. Nobody writes verse for his own pleasure, or even relief, without the barometer of his spirits being on the rise. They are tokens of that abiding youthfulness which never leaves him while he can write a living line. The poet, we need not say, is forever sighing over the youth that is past and gone, not taking note of the youth that remains to him, altogether independent of years. But in fact he is a boy all his life, capable of finding

amusement in matters which the plodding man of the world considers puerile, and so conferring on his readers and lovers some share of his own spring, some taste of the freshness which helps to keep the world alive.

From The Cornhill Magazine.

FAR FROM THE MADDING CROWD.

CHAPTER XXX.

HOT CHEEKS AND TEARFUL EYES.

HALF-AN-HOUR later Bathsheba entered her own house. There burnt upon her face when she met the light of the candles the flush and excitement which were little less than chronic with her now. The farewell words of Troy, who had accompanied her to the very door, still lingered in her ears. He had bidden her adieu for two days, which were, so he stated, to be spent at Bath in visiting some friends. He had also kissed her a second time.

It is only fair to Bathsheba to explain here a little fact which did not come to light till a long time afterwards: that Troy's presentation of himself so aptly at the roadside this evening was not by any distinctly preconceived arrangement. He had hinted—she had forbidden; and it was only on the chance of his still coming that she had dismissed Oak, fearing a meeting between them just then.

She now sank down into a chair, wild and perturbed by all these new and fevering sequences. Then she jumped up with a manner of decision, and fetched her desk from a side table.

In three minutes, without pause or modification, she had written a letter to Boldwood, at his address beyond Casterbridge, saying mildly but firmly that she had well considered the whole subject he had brought before her and kindly given her time to decide upon; that her final decision was that she could not marry him. She had expressed to Oak an intention to wait till Boldwood came home before communicating to him her conclusive reply. But Bathsheba found that she could not wait.

It was impossible to send this letter till the next day; yet to quell her uneasiness by getting it out of her hands, and so as it were, setting the act in motion at once, she arose to take it to any one of the women who might be in the kitchen.

She paused in the passage. A dialogue was going on in the kitchen, and Bathsheba and Troy were the subject of it."

"If he marry her, she'll gie up farming."

"'Twill be a gallant life, but may bring some trouble between the mirth—so say I."

"Well, I wish I had half such a husband."

Bathsheba had too much sense to mind seriously what her servitors said about her; but too much womanly redundancy of speech to leave alone what was said till it died the natural death of unminded things. She burst in upon them.

"Who are you speaking of?" she asked.

There was a pause before anybody replied. At last Liddy said, frankly, "What was passing was a bit of a word about yourself, miss."

"I thought so! Maryann and Liddy and Temperance—now I forbid you to suppose such things. You know I don't care the least for Mr. Troy—not I. Everybody knows how much I hate him.—Yes," repeated the froward young person, "hate him!"

"We know you do, miss," said Liddy, "and so do we all."

"I hate him too," said Maryann.

"Maryann—O you perjured woman! How you can speak that wicked story!" said Bathsheba, excitedly. "You admired him from your heart only this morning in the very world, you did. Yes, Maryann, you know it!"

"Yes, miss, but so did you. He is a wild scamp now, and you are right to hate him."

"He's *not* a wild scamp! How dare you to my face! I have no right to hate him, nor you, nor anybody. But I am a silly woman. What is it to me what he is? You know it is nothing. I don't care for him; I don't mean to defend his good name, not I. Mind this, if any of you say a word against him you'll be dismissed instantly."

She flung down the letter and surged back into the parlour, with a big heart and tearful eyes, Liddy following her.

"O miss!" said mild Liddy, looking pitifully into Bathsheba's face. "I am sorry we mistook you so! I did think you cared for him; but I see you don't now."

"Shut the door, Liddy."

Liddy closed the door, and went on: "People always says such foolery, miss."

I'll make answer hencefor'ard, 'Of course a lady like Miss Everdene can't love him; I'll say it out in plain black and white."

Bathsheba burst out: "O Liddy, you are such a simpleton! Can't you read riddles? Can't you see! Are you a woman yourself!"

Liddy's clear eyes rounded with wonderment.

"Yes, you must be a blind thing, Liddy!" she said, in reckless abandonment and grief. "Oh, I love him to very distraction and misery and agony. Don't be frightened at me, though perhaps I am enough to frighten any innocent woman. Come closer—closer." She put her arms round Liddy's neck. "I must let it out to somebody; it is wearing me away. Don't you yet know enough of me to see through that miserable denial of mine? O God, what a lie it was! Heaven and my Love forgive me. And don't you know that a woman who loves at all thinks nothing of perjury when it is balanced against her love? There, go out of the room; I want to be quite alone."

Liddy went towards the door.

"Liddy, come here. Solemnly swear to me that he's not a bad man; that it is all lies they say about him!"

"But, miss, how can I say he is not if —"

"You graceless girl. How can you have the cruel heart to repeat what they say? Unfeeling thing that you are. . . . But I'll see if you or anybody else in the village, or town either, dare do such a thing!" She started off, pacing from fireplace to door, and back again.

"No, miss. I don't—I know it is not true," said Liddy, frightened at Bathsheba's unwonted vehemence.

"I suppose you only agree with me like that to please me. But, Liddy, he *cannot* be bad, as is said. Do you hear?"

"Yes, miss, yes."

"And you don't believe he is?"

"I don't know what to say, miss," said Liddy, beginning to cry. "If I say No, you don't believe me; and if I say Yes, you rage at me."

"Say you don't believe it—say you don't!"

"I don't believe him to be so bad as they make out."

"He is not bad at all. . . . My poor life and heart, how weak I am!" she moaned, in a relaxed, desultory way, heedless of Liddy's presence. "Oh, how I wish I had never seen him! Loving is

misery for women always. I shall never forgive my Maker for making me a woman, and dearly am I beginning to pay for the honour of owning a pretty face." She freshened and turned to Liddy suddenly. "Mind this, Lydia Smallbury, if you repeat anywhere a single word of what I have said to you inside this closed door, I'll never trust you, or love you, or have you with me a moment longer—not a moment."

"I don't want to repeat anything," said Liddy with womanly dignity of a diminutive order; "but I don't wish to stay with you. And, if you please, I'll go at the end of the harvest, or this week, or to-day. . . . I don't see that I deserve to be put upon and stormed at for nothing!" concluded the small woman, bigly.

"No, no, Liddy; you must stay!" said Bathsheba, dropping from haughtiness to entreaty with capricious inconsequence. "You must not notice my being in a taking just now. You are not as a servant—you are a companion to me. Dear, dear—I don't know what I am doing since this miserable ache o' my heart has weighted and worn upon me so. What shall I come to! I suppose I shall die quite young. Yes, I know I shall. I wonder sometimes if I am doomed to die in the Union. I am friendless enough, God knows."

"I won't notice anything, nor will I leave you!" sobbed Liddy, impulsively putting up her lips to Bathsheba's, and kissing her.

Then Bathsheba kissed Liddy, and all was smooth again.

"I don't often cry, do I, Lidd? but you have made tears come into my eyes," she said, a smile shining through the moisture. "Try to think him a good man, won't you, dear Liddy?"

"I will, miss, indeed."

"He is a sort of steady man in a wild way, you know. That's better than to be as some are, wild in a steady way. I am afraid that's how I am. And promise me to keep my secret—do, Liddy! And do not let them know that I have been crying about him, because it will be dreadful for me, and no good to him, poor thing!"

"Death's head himself shan't wring it from me, mistress, if I've a mind to keep anything, and I'll always be your friend," replied Liddy, emphatically, at the same time bringing a few more tears into her own eyes, not from any particular necessity, but from an artistic sense of making herself in keeping with the remainder of

the picture, which seems to influence women at such times. "I think God likes us to be good friends, don't you?"

"Indeed I do."

"And, dear miss, you won't harry me and storm at me, will you? because you seem to swell so tall as a lion then, and it frightens me. Do you know, I fancy you would be a match for any man when you are in one o' your takings."

"Never! do you?" said Bathsheba, slightly laughing, though somewhat seriously alarmed by this Amazonian picture of herself. "I hope I am not a bold sort of maid—mannish?" she continued, with some anxiety.

"Oh no, not mannish; but so almighty womanish that 'tis getting on that way sometimes. Ah! miss," she said, after having drawn her breath very sadly in and sent it very sadly out, "I wish I had half your failing that way. 'Tis a great protection to a poor maid in these days!"

CHAPTER XXXI.

BLAME: FURY.

THE next evening Bathsheba, with the idea of getting out of the way of Mr. Boldwood in the event of his returning to answer her note in person, proceeded to fulfil an engagement made with Liddy some few hours earlier. Bathsheba's companion, as a gage of their reconciliation, had been granted a week's holiday to visit her sister, who was married to a thriving hurdler and cattle crib-maker living in a delightful labyrinth of hazel copse not far from Yalbury. The arrangement was that Miss Everdene should honour them by coming there for a day or two to inspect some ingenious contrivances which this man of the woods had introduced into his wares.

Leaving her instructions with Gabriel and Maryann that they were to see everything carefully locked up for the night, she went out of the house just at the close of a timely thunder-shower, which had refined the air, and daintily bathed the mere coat of the land, all beneath being dry as ever. Freshness was exhaled in an essence from the varied contours of bank and hollow, as if the earth breathed maiden breath, and the pleased birds were hymning to the scene. Before her among the clouds there was a contrast in the shape of lairs of fierce light which showed themselves in the neighbourhood of a hidden sun, lingering on to the farthest north-west corner of

the heavens that this midsummer season allowed.

She had walked nearly three m'les of her journey, watching how the day was retreating, and thinking how the time of deeds was quietly melting into the time of thoughts, to give place in its turn to the time of prayer and sleep, when she beheld advancing over the hill the very man she sought so anxiously to elude. Boldwood was stepping on, not with that quiet tread of reserved strength which was his customary gait, in which he always seemed to be balancing two thoughts. His manner was stunned and sluggish now.

Boldwood had for the first time been awakened to woman's privileges in the practice of tergiversation without regard to another's distraction and possible blight. That Bathsheba was a firm and positive girl, far less inconsequent than her fellows, had been the very lung of his hope; for he had held that these qualities would lead her to adhere to a straight course for consistency's sake, and accept him, though her fancy might not flood him with the iridescent hues of uncritical love. But the argument now came back as sorry gleams from a broken mirror. The discovery was no less a scourge than a surprise.

He came on looking upon the ground, and did not see Bathsheba till they were less than a stone's throw apart. He looked up at the sound of her pit-pat, and his changed appearance sufficiently denoted to her the depth and strength of the feelings paralyzed by her letter.

"Oh; is it you, Mr. Boldwood," she faltered, a guilty warmth pulsing in her face.

Those who have the power of reproaching in silence may find it a means more effective than words. There are accents in the eye which are not on the tongue, and more tales come from pale lips than can enter an ear. It is both the grandeur and the pain of the remoter moods that they avoid the pathway of sound. Boldwood's look was unanswerable.

Seeing she turned a little aside, he said, "What, are you afraid of me?"

"Why should you say that?" said Bathsheba.

"I fancied you looked so," said he. "And it is most strange, because of its contrast with my feeling for you."

She reained self-possession, fixed her eyes calmly, and waited.

"You know what that feeling is," con-

tinued Boldwood deliberately. "A thing strong as death. No dismissal by a hasty letter affects that."

"I wish you did not feel so strongly about me," she murmured. "It is generous of you and more than I deserve, but I must not hear it now."

"Hear it? What do you think I have to say, then? I am not to marry you, and that's enough. Your letter was excellently plain. I want you to hear nothing—not I."

Bathsheba was unable to direct her will into any definite groove for freeing herself from this fearfully awkward position. She confusedly said, "Good evening," and was moving on. Boldwood walked up to her heavily and dully.

"Bathsheba—darling—is it final indeed?"

"Indeed it is."

"O, Bathsheba—have pity upon me!" Boldwood burst out. "God's sake, yes—I am come to that low, lowest stage—to ask a woman for pity! Still, she is you—she is you."

Bathsheba commanded herself well. But she could hardly get a clear voice for what came instinctively to her lips: "There is little honour to the woman in that speech." It was only whispered, for something unutterably mournful no less than distressing in this spectacle of a man showing himself to be so entirely the vane of a passion enervated the feminine instinct for punctilios.

"I am beyond myself about this, and am mad," he said. "I am no stoic at all to be supplicating here; but I do supplicate to you. I wish you knew what is in me of devotion to you; but it is impossible, that. In bare human mercy to a lonely man don't throw me off now!"

"I don't throw you off—indeed, how can I? I never had you." In her noon-clear sense that she had never loved him she forgot for a moment her thoughtless angle on that day in February.

"But there was a time when you turned to me, before I thought of you. I don't reproach you, for even now I feel that the ignorant and cold darkness that I should have lived in if you had not attracted me by that letter—valentine you call it—would have been worse than my knowledge of you, though it has brought this misery. But, I say, there was a time when I knew nothing of you, and cared nothing for you, and yet you drew me on. And if you say you gave me no encouragement I cannot but contradict you."

"What you call encouragement was

the childish game of an idle minute. I have bitterly repented of it—ay, bitterly, and in tears. Can you still go on reminding me?"

"I don't accuse you of it—I deplore it. I took for earnest what you insist was jest, and now this that I pray to be jest you say is awful wretched earnest. Our moods meet at wrong places. I wish your feeling was more like mine, or my feeling more like yours! O could I but have foreseen the torture that trifling trick was going to lead me into, how I should have cursed you; but only having been able to see it since, I cannot do that, for I love you too well! But it is weak, idle drivelling to go on like this. . . . Bathsheba, you are the first woman of any shade or nature that I have ever looked at to love, and it is the having been so near claiming you for my own that makes this denial so hard to bear. How nearly you promised me! But I don't speak now to move your heart, and make you grieve because of my pain; it is no use, that. I must bear it; my pain would get no less by paining you."

"But I do pity you—deeply—oh so deeply!" she earnestly said.

"Do no such thing—do no such thing. Your dear love, Bathsheba, is such a vast thing beside your pity that the loss of your pity as well as your love is no great addition to my sorrow, nor does the gain of your pity make it sensibly less. Oh sweet—how dearly you spoke to me behind the spear-bed at the washing-pool, and in the barn at the shearing, and that dearest last time in the evening at your home! Where are your pleasant words all gone—your earnest hope to be able to love me? Where is your firm conviction that you would get to care for me very much? Really forgotten?—really?"

She checked emotion, looked him quietly and clearly in the face, and said in her low firm voice, "Mr. Boldwood, I promised you nothing. Would you have had me a woman of clay when you paid me that furthest, highest compliment a man can pay a woman—telling her he loves her? I was bound to show some feeling, if I would not be a graceless shrew. Yet each of those pleasures was just for the day—the day just for the pleasure. How was I to know that what is a pastime to all other men was death to you? Have reason, do, and think more kindly of me!"

"Well, never mind arguing—never mind. One thing is sure: you were all

but mine, and now you are not nearly mine. Everything is changed, and that by you alone, remember. You were nothing to me once, and I was contented; you are now nothing to me again, and how different the second nothing is from the first! Would to God you had never taken me up, since it was only to throw me down!"

Bathsheba, in spite of her mettle, began to feel unmistakable signs that she was inherently the weaker vessel. She strove miserably against this femininity which would insist upon supplying unbidden emotions in stronger and stronger current. She had tried to elude agitation by fixing her mind on the trees, sky, any trivial object before her eyes, whilst his reproaches fell, but ingenuity could not save her now.

"I did not take you up—surely I did not!" she answered as heroically as she could. "But don't be in this mood with me. I can endure being told I am in the wrong, if you will only tell it me gently! Oh sir, will you not kindly forgive me, and look at it cheerfully?"

"Cheerfully! Can a man fooled to utter heartburning find a reason for being merry? If I have lost, how can I be as if I had won? Heavens, you must be heartless quite! Had I known what a fearfully bitter sweet this was to be, how I would have avoided you, and never seen you, and been deaf to you. I tell you all this, but what do you care! You don't care."

She returned silent and weak denials to his charges, and swayed her head desperately, as if to thrust away the words as they came showering about her ears from the lips of the trembling man in the climax of life, with his bronzed Roman face, and fine frame.

"Dearest, dearest, I am wavering even now between the two opposites of recklessly renouncing you, and labouring humbly for you again. Forget that you have said No, and let it be as it was. Say, Bathsheba, that you only wrote that refusal to me in fun—come, say it to me!"

"It would be untrue, and painful to both of us. You overrate my capacity for love. I don't possess half the warmth of nature you believe me to have. An unprotected childhood in a cold world has beaten gentleness out of me."

He immediately said with more resentment: "That may be true, somewhat; but ah, Miss Everdene, it won't do as a reason! You are not the cold woman

you would have me believe. No, no. It isn't because you have no feeling in you that you don't love me. You naturally would have me think so—you would hide from me that you have a burning heart like mine. You have love enough, but it is turned into a new channel. I know where."

The swift music of her heart became hubbub now, and she throbbed to extremity. He was coming to Troy. He did then know what had transpired! And the name fell from his lips the next moment.

"Why did Troy not leave my treasure alone?" he asked, fiercely. "When I had no thought of injuring him why did he force himself upon your notice! Before he worried you your inclination was to have me; when next I should have come to you your answer would have been Yes. Can you deny it—I ask, can you deny it?"

She delayed the reply, but was too honest to withhold it. "I cannot," she whispered.

"I know you cannot. But he stole in in my absence and robbed me. Why didn't he win you away before, when nobody would have been grieved?—when nobody would have been set tale-bearing. Now the people sneer at me—the very hills and sky seem to laugh at me till I blush shamefully for my folly. I have lost my respect, my good name, my standing—lost it, never to get it again. Go and marry your man—go on!"

"Oh sir—Mr. Boldwood!"

"You may as well. I have no further claim upon you. As for me, I had better go somewhere alone, and hide,—and pray. I loved a woman once. I am now ashamed. When I am dead they'll say, miserable, love-sick man that he was. Heaven—heaven—if I had got jilted secretly, and the dishonour not known, and my position kept! But no matter, it is gone, and the woman not gained. Shame upon him—shame!"

His unreasonable anger terrified her, and she glided from him, without obviously moving, as she said, "I am only a girl—do not speak to me so!"

"All the time you knew—how very well you knew—that your new freak was my misery. Dazzled by brass and scarlet—oh Bathsheba—this is woman's folly indeed!"

She fired up at once. "You are taking too much upon yourself!" she said, vehemently. "Everybody is upon me—everybody. It is unmanly to attack a

woman so! I have nobody in the world to fight my battles for me, but no mercy is shown. Yet if a thousand of you sneer and say things against me, I *will not* be put down!"

"You'll chatter with him doubtless about me. Say to him, 'Boldwood would have died for me.' Yes, and you have given way to him knowing him to be not the man for you. He has kissed you—claimed you as his. Do you hear, he has kissed you. Deny it!"

The most tragic woman is cowed by a tragic man, and although Boldwood was, in vehemence and glow, nearly her own self rendered into another sex, Bathsheba's cheek quivered. She gasped, "Leave me sir—leave me! I am nothing to you. Let me go on!"

"Deny that he has kissed you."

"I shall not."

"Ha—then he has!" came hoarsely from the farmer.

"He has," she said slowly, and in spite of her fear, defiantly. "I am not ashamed to speak the truth."

"Then curse him; and curse him!" said Boldwood, breaking into a whispered fury. "Whilst I would have given worlds to touch your hand you have let a rake come in without right or ceremony and—kiss you! Heaven's mercy—kiss you! . . . Ah, a time of his life shall come when he will have to repent—and think wretchedly of the pain he has caused another man; and then may he ache, and wish, and curse, and yearn—as I do now!"

"Don't, don't, oh don't pray down evil upon him!" she implored in a miserable cry. "Anything but that—anything. Oh be kind to him, sir, for I love him dearly!"

Boldwood's ideas had reached that point of fusion at which outline and consistency entirely disappear. The impending night appeared to concentrate in his eye. He did not hear her at all now.

"I'll punish him—by my soul that will I! I'll meet him, soldier or no, and I'll horsewhip the unwimely stripping for this reckless theft of my one delight. If he were a hundred men I'd horsewhip him . . ." He dropped his voice suddenly and unnaturally. "Bathsheba, sweet lost coquette, pardon me. I've been blaming you, threatening you, behaving like a churl to you, when he's the greatest sinner. He stole your dear heart away with his unfathomable lies! . . . It is a fortunate thing for him that he's gone back to his regiment—that he's in Mel-

chester, and not here! I hope he may not return here just yet. I pray God he may not come into my sight, for I may be tempted beyond myself. Oh Bathsheba, keep him away—yes, keep him away from me!"

For a moment Boldwood stood so inertly after this that his soul seemed to have been entirely exhaled with the breath of his passionate words. He turned his face away, and withdrew, and his form was soon covered over by the twilight as his footsteps mixed in with the low hiss of the leafy trees.

Bathsheba, who had been standing motionless as a model all this latter time, flung her hands to her face, and wildly attempted to ponder on the exhibition which had just passed away. Such astounding wells of fevered feeling in a still man like Mr. Boldwood were incomprehensible, dreadful. Instead of being a man trained to repression he was—what she had seen him.

The force of the farmer's threats lay in their relation to a circumstance known at present only to herself; her lover was coming back to Weatherbury the very next day. Troy had not returned to Melchester Barracks as Boldwood and others supposed, but had merely gone for a day or two to visit some acquaintance in Bath, and had yet a week or more remaining to his furlough.

She felt wretchedly certain that if he revisited her just at this nick of time, and came into contact with Boldwood, a fierce quarrel would be the consequence. She panted with solicitude when she thought of possible injury to Troy. The least spark would kindle the farmer's swift feelings of rage and jealousy; he would lose his self-mastery as he had this evening; Troy's blitheness might become aggressive; it might take the direction of derision, and Boldwood's anger might then take the direction of revenge.

With almost a morbid dread of being thought a gushing girl, this guideless woman too well concealed from the world under a manner of carelessness the warm depths of her strong emotions. But now there was no reserve. In her distraction, instead of advancing further, she walked up and down, beating the air with her fingers, pressing her brow, and sobbing brokenly to herself. Then she sat down on a heap of stones by the wayside to think. There she remained long. The dark rotundity of the earth approached the foreshores and promontories of copery cloud which bounded a green and

pellucid expanse in the western sky, amaranthine glosses came over them then, and the unresting world wheeled her round to a contrasting prospect eastward, in the shape of indecisive and palpitating stars. She gazed upon their silent throes amid the shades of space, but realized none at all. Her troubled spirit was far away with Troy.

CHAPTER XXXII.

NIGHT: HORSES TRAMPING.

THE village of Weatherbury was quiet as the graveyard in its midst, and the living were lying well-nigh as still as the dead. The church clock struck eleven. The air was so empty of other sounds that the whirr of the clockwork immediately before the strokes was distinct, and so was also the click of the same at their close. The notes flew forth with the usual blind obtuseness of inanimate things — flapping and rebounding among walls, undulating against the scattered clouds, spreading through their interstices into unexplored miles of space.

Bathsheba's crannied and mouldy halls were to-night occupied only by Maryann, Liddy being, as was stated, with her sister, whom Bathsheba had set out to visit. A few minutes after eleven had struck, Maryann turned in her bed with a sense of being disturbed. She was totally unconscious of the nature of the interruption to her sleep. It led to a dream, and the dream to an awakening, with an uneasy sensation that something had happened. She left her bed and looked out of the window. The paddock abutted on this end of the building, and in the paddock she could just discern by the uncertain gray a moving figure approaching the horse that was feeding there. The figure seized the horse by the forelock, and led it to the corner of the field. Here she could see some object which circumstances proved to be a vehicle, for after a few minutes' spent apparently in harnessing, she heard the trot of the horse down the road, mingled with the sound of light wheels.

Two varieties only of humanity could have entered the paddock with the ghost-like glide of that mysterious figure. They were a woman and a gipsy man. A woman was out of the question in such an occupation at this hour, and the comer could be no less than a thief, who might probably have known the weakness of the household on this particular night, and have chosen it on that account for his

daring attempt. Moreover, to raise suspicion to conviction itself, there were gipsies in Weatherbury Bottom.

Maryann, who had been afraid to shout in the robber's presence, having seen him depart, had no fear. She hastily slipped on her clothes, stumped down the disjointed staircase with its hundred creaks, ran to Coggan's, the nearest house, and raised an alarm. Coggan called Gabriel, who now again lodged in his house as at first, and together they went to the paddock. Beyond all doubt the horse was gone.

"Listen!" said Gabriel.

They listened. Distinct upon the stagnant air came the sounds of a trotting horse passing over Weatherbury Hill — just beyond the gipsies' encampment in Weatherbury Bottom.

"That's our Dainty — I'll swear to her step," said Jan.

"Mighty me! Won't mis'ess storm and call us stupids when she comes back!" moaned Maryann. "How I wish it had happened when she was at home, and none of us had been answerable!"

"We must ride after," said Gabriel, decisively. "I'll be responsible to Miss Everdene for what we do. Yes, we'll follow."

"Faith, I don't see how," said Coggan. "All our horses are too heavy for that trick except little Poppet, and what's she between two of us? — If we only had that pair over the hedge we might do something."

"Which pair?"

"Mr. Boldwood's Tidy and Moll."

"Then wait here till I come hither again," said Gabriel. He ran down the hill towards Farmer Boldwood's.

"Farmer Boldwood is not at home," said Maryann.

"All the better," said Coggan. "I know what he's gone for."

Less than five minutes brought up Oak again, running at the same pace, with two halters dangling from his hand.

"Where did you find 'em?" said Coggan, turning round and leaping upon the hedge without waiting for an answer.

"Under the eaves. I knew where they were kept," said Gabriel, following him. "Coggan, you can ride bare-backed? there's no time to look for saddles."

"Like a hero!" said Jan.

"Maryann, you go to bed," Gabriel shouted to her from the top of the hedge.

Springing down into Boldwood's pastures, each pocketed his halter to hide it

from the horses, who, seeing the men empty-handed, docilely allowed themselves to be seized by the mane, when the halters were dexterously slipped on. Having neither bit nor bridle, Oak and Coggan extemporized the former by passing the rope in each case through the animal's mouth and looping it on the other side. Oak vaulted astride, and Coggan clambered up by aid of the bank, when they ascended to the gate and galloped off in the direction taken by Bathsheba's horse and the robber. Whose vehicle the horse had been harnessed to was a matter of some uncertainty.

Weatherbury Bottom was reached in three or four minutes. They scanned the shady green patch by the roadside. The gipsies were gone.

"The villains!" said Gabriel. "Which way have they gone, I wonder?"

"Straight on, as sure as God made little apples," said Jan.

"Very well; we are better mounted, and must overtake 'em," said Oak. "Now, on at full speed!"

No sound of the rider in their van could now be discovered. The road-metal grew softer and more clayey as Weatherbury was left behind, and the late rain had wetted its surface to a somewhat plastic, but not muddy state. They came to cross-roads. Coggan suddenly pulled up Moll and slipped off.

"What's the matter?" said Gabriel.

"We must try to track 'em, since we can't hear 'em," said Jan, fumbling in his pockets. He struck a light, and held the match to the ground. The rain had been heavier here, and all foot and horse tracks made previous to the storm had been abraded and blurred by the drops, and they were now so many little scoops of water, which reflected the flame of the match like eyes. One set of tracks was fresh and had no water in them; one pair of ruts was also empty, and not small canals, like the others. The footprints forming this recent impression were full of information as to pace; they were in equidistant pairs, three or four feet apart, the right and left foot of each pair being exactly opposite one another.

"Straight on!" Jan exclaimed. "Tracks like that mean a stiff gallop. No wonder we don't hear him. And the horse is harnessed—look at the ruts. Ay, that's our mare sure enough!"

"How do you know?"

"Old Jimmy Harris only shod her last week, and I'd swear to his make among ten thousand."

"The rest of the gipsies must have gone on earlier, or some other way," said Oak. "You saw there were no other tracks?"

"Trew." They rode along silently for a long weary time. Coggan's watch struck one. He lighted another match, and examined the ground again.

"Tis a canter now," he said, "throwing away the light. A twisty rickety pace for a gig. The fact is, they overdrove her at starting; we shall catch them yet."

Again they hastened on. Coggan's watch struck two. When they looked again the hoof-marks were so spaced as to form a sort of zig-zag if united, like the lamps along a street.

"That's a trot, I know," said Gabriel.

"Only a trot now," said Coggan cheerfully. "We shall overtake him in time."

They pushed rapidly on for yet two or three miles. "Ah! a moment," said Jan. "Let's see how she was driven up this hill. 'Twill help us." A light was promptly struck upon his gaiters as before, and the examination made.

"Hurrah!" said Coggan. "She walked up here—and well she might. We shall get them in two miles, for a crown."

They rode three and listened. No sound was to be heard save a mill-pond trickling hoarsely through a hatch, and suggesting gloomy possibilities of drowning by jumping in. Gabriel dismounted when they came to a turning. The tracks were absolutely the only guide as to the direction that they now had, and great caution was necessary to avoid confusing them with some others which had made their appearance lately.

"What does this mean?—though I guess," said Gabriel, looking up at Coggan as he moved the match over the ground about the turning. Coggan, who, no less than the panting horses, had latterly shown signs of weariness, again scrutinized the mystic characters. This time only three were of the regular horse-shoe shape. Every fourth was a dot.

He screwed up his face, and emitted a long "whew-w-w!"

"Lame?" said Oak.

"Yes. Dainty is lamed; the near-foot-fore," said Coggan slowly, staring still at the footprints.

"We'll push on," said Gabriel, remounting his humid steed.

Although the road along its greater part had been as good as any turnpike-road in the country it was nominally only a byway. The last turning had brought

them into the high road leading to Bath. Coggan recollected himself.

"We shall have him now!" he exclaimed.

"Where?"

"Petiton Turnpike. The keeper of that gate is the sleepest man between here and London — Dan Randall, that's his name — knowed en for years, when he was at Casterbridge gate. Between the lameness and the gate 'tis a done job."

They now advanced with extreme caution. Nothing was said until, against a shady background of foliage, five white bars were visible, crossing their route a little way ahead.

"Hush — we are almost close!" said Gabriel.

"Amble on upon the grass," said Coggan.

The white bars were blotted out in the midst by a dark shape in front of them. The silence of this lonely time was pierced by an exclamation from that quarter.

"Hoy-a-hoy! Gate!"

It appeared that there had been a previous call which they had not noticed, for on their close approach the door of the turnpike house opened, and the keeper came out half-dressed, with a candle in his hand. The rays illumined the whole group.

"Keep the gate close!" shouted Gabriel. "He has stolen the horse!"

"Who?" said the turnpike man.

Gabriel looked at the driver of the gig, and saw a woman — Bathsheba, his mistress.

On hearing his voice she had turned her face away from the light. Coggan had, however, caught sight of her in the meanwhile.

"Why, 'tis mistress — I'll take my oath!" he said, amazed.

Bathsheba it certainly was, and she had by this time done the trick she could do so well in crises not of love, namely, mask a surprise by coolness of manner.

"Well, Gabriel," she enquired quietly, "where are you going?"

"We thought —" began Gabriel.

"I am driving to Bath," she said, taking for her own use the assurance that Gabriel lacked. "An important matter made it necessary for me to give up my visit to Liddy, and go off at once. What, then, were you following me?"

"We thought the horse was stole."

"Well — what a thing! How very

foolish of you not to know that I had taken the trap and horse. I could neither wake Maryann nor get into the house, though I hammered for ten minutes against her window-sill. Fortunately, I could get the key of the coach-house, so I troubled no one further. Didn't you think it might be me?"

"Why should we, miss?"

"Perhaps not. Why, those are never Farmer Boldwood's horses! Goodness mercy! what have you been doing — bringing trouble upon me in this way? What! mustn't a lady move an inch from her door without being dogged like a thief?"

"But how were we to know, if you left no account of your doings," expostulated Coggan, "and ladies don't drive at these hours as a jeneral rule of society."

"I did leave an account — and you would have seen it in the morning. I wrote in chalk on the coach-house doors that I had come back for the horse and gig, and driven off; that I could arouse nobody, and should return soon."

"But you'll consider, ma'am, that we couldn't see that till it got daylight."

"True," she said, and though vexed at first she had too much sense to blame them long or seriously for a devotion to her that was as valuable as it was rare. She added with a very pretty grace, "Well, I really thank you heartily for taking all this trouble; but I wish you had borrowed anybody's horses but Mr. Boldwood's."

"Dainty is lame, miss," said Coggan. "Can you go on?"

"It was only a stone in her shoe. I dismounted and pulled it out a hundred yards back. I can manage very well, thank you. I shall be in Bath by daylight. Will you now return, please?"

She turned her head — the gateman's candle shimmering upon her quick, clear eyes as she did so — passed through the gate, and was soon wrapped in the embowering shades of mysterious summer boughs. Coggan and Gabriel put about their horses, and, fanned by the velvety air of this July night, retraced the road by which they had come.

"A strange vagary, this of hers, isn't it, Oak?" said Coggan, curiously.

"Yes," said Gabriel, shortly. "Coggan, suppose we keep this night's work as quiet as we can?"

"I am of one and the same mind."

"Very well. We shall be home by three o'clock or so, and can creep into the parish like lambs."

Bathsheba's perturbed meditations by the roadside had ultimately evolved a conclusion that there were only two remedies for the present desperate state of affairs. The first was merely to keep Troy away from Weatherbury till Boldwood's indignation had cooled; the second to listen to Oak's entreaties, and Boldwood's denunciations, and give up Troy altogether.

Alas! Could she give up this new love—induce him to renounce her by saying she did not like him—could no more speak to him, and beg him, for her good, to end his furlough in Bath, and see her and Weatherbury no more?

It was a picture full of misery, but for a while she contemplated it firmly, allowing herself, nevertheless, as girls will, to dwell upon the happy life she would have enjoyed had Troy been Boldwood, and the path of love the path of duty—infllicting upon herself gratuitous tortures by imagining him the lover of another woman, after forgetting her; for she had penetrated Troy's nature so far as to estimate his tendencies pretty accurately, but unfortunately loved him no less in thinking that he might soon cease to love her—indeed considerably more.

She jumped to her feet. She would see him at once. Yes, she would implore him by word of mouth to assist her in the dilemma. A letter to keep him away could not reach him in time, even if he should be disposed to listen to it.

Was Bathsheba altogether blind to the obvious fact that the support of a lover's arms is not of a kind best calculated to assist a resolve to renounce him? Or was she sophistically sensible, with a thrill of pleasure, that by adopting this course of getting rid of him she was ensuring a meeting with him, at any rate once more?

It was now dark, and the hour must have been nearly ten. The only way to accomplish her purpose was to give up the idea of visiting Liddy at Yalbury, return to Weatherbury Farm, put the horse into the gig, and drive at once to Bath. The scheme seemed at first impossible: the journey was a fearfully heavy one, even for a strong horse; it was most venturesome for a woman, at night, and alone.

But could she go on to Liddy's and leave things to take their course? No, no, anything but that. Bathsheba was full of a stimulating turbulence, beside which caution vainly prayed for a hear-

ing. She turned back towards the village.

Her walk was slow, for she wished not to enter Weatherbury till the cottagers were in bed, and, particularly till Boldwood was secure. Her plan was now to drive to Bath during the night, see Sergeant Troy in the morning before he set out to come to her, bid him farewell, and dismiss him: then to rest the horse thoroughly (herself to weep the while, she thought), starting early the next morning on her return journey. By this arrangement she could trot Dainty gently all the day, reach Liddy at Yalbury in the evening, and come home to Weatherbury with her whenever they chose—so nobody would know that she had been to Bath at all.

This idea she proceeded to carry out, with what success we have already seen.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

IN THE SUN: A HARBINGER.

A WEEK passed, and there were no tidings of Bathsheba; nor was there any explanation of her Gilpin's rig.

Then a note came for Maryann, stating that the business which had called her mistress to Bath still detained her there; but that she hoped to return in the course of another week.

Another week passed. The oat-harvest began, and all the men were afield under a monochromatic Lammas sky, amid the trembling air and short shadows of noon. In-doors nothing was to be heard save the droning of blue-bottle flies; out-of-doors the whetting of scythes and the hiss of tressy oat-ears rubbing together as their perpendicular stalks of amber-yellow fell heavily to each swath. Every drop of moisture not in the men's bottles and flagons in the form of cider was raining as perspiration from their foreheads and cheeks. Drought was everywhere else.

They were about to withdraw for a while into the charitable shade of a tree in the fence, when Coggan saw a figure in a blue coat and brass buttons running to them across the field.

"I wonder who that is?" he said.

"I hope nothing is wrong about mistress," said Maryann, who with some other women were tying the bundles (oats being always sheafed on this farm), "but an unlucky token came to me in-doors this morning. I went to unlock the door and dropped the key, and it fell

upon the stone floor and broke into two pieces. Breaking a key is a dreadful bodement. I wish mis'sess was home."

"'Tis Cain Ball," said Gabriel, pausing from whetting his reaphook.

Oak was not bound by his agreement to assist in the corn-field; but the harvest-month is an anxious time for a farmer, and the corn was Bathsheba's, so he lent a hand.

"He's dressed up in his best clothes," said Matthew Moon. "He hev been away from home for a few days, since he's had that felon upon his finger; for a' said, since I can't work I'll have a hollerday."

"A good time for one—an excellent time," said Joseph Poorgrass, straightening his back; for he, like some of the others, had a way of resting a while from his labour on such hot days for reasons preternaturally small; of which Cain Ball's advent on a week-day in his Sunday clothes was one of the first magnitude. "'Twas a bad leg allowed me to read the *Pilgrim's Progress*, and Mark Clark learnt All-Fours in a whitlow."

"Ay, and my father put his arm out of joint to have time to go courting," said Jan Coggan in an eclipsing tone, wiping his face with his shirt-sleeve and thrusting back his hat upon the nape of his neck.

By this time Cainy was nearing the group of harvesters, and was perceived to be carrying a large slice of bread and ham in one hand, from which he took mouthfuls as he ran, the other hand being wrapped in a bandage. When he came close, his mouth assumed the bell shape, and he began to cough violently.

"Now, Cainy!" said Gabriel, sternly. "How many more times must I tell you to keep from running so fast when you are eating? You'll choke yourself some day, that's what you'll do, Cain Ball."

"Hok-hok-hok!" replied Cain. "A crumb of my victuals went the wrong way—hok-hok! That's what 'tis, Mister Oak! And I've been visiting to Bath because I had a felon on my thumb; yes, and I've seen—ahok-hok!"

Directly Cain mentioned Bath, they all threw down their hooks and forks and drew round him. Unfortunately the erratic crumb did not improve his narrative powers, and a supplementary hindrance was that of a sneeze, jerking from his pocket his rather large watch, which dangled in front of the young man pendulum-wise.

"Yes," he continued, directing his

thoughts to Bath and letting his eyes follow, "I've seed the world at last—yes—and I've seed our missis—ahok-hok-hok!"

"Bother the boy!" said Gabriel. "Something is always going the wrong way down your throat, so that you can't tell what's necessary to be told."

"Ahok! there! Please, Mister Oak, a gnat have just flew into my stomach, and brought the cough on again!"

"Yes, that's just it. Your mouth is always open, you young rascal."

"'Tis terrible bad to have a gnat fly down yer throat, pore boy!" said Matthew Moon.

"Well, at Bath you saw"—prompted Gabriel.

"I saw our mistress," continued the junior shepherd, "and a soldier, walking along. And bymeby they got closer and closer, and then they went arm-in-crook, like courting complete—hok-hok! like courting complete—hok!—courting complete——" Losing the thread of his narrative at this point simultaneously with his loss of breath, their informant looked up and down the field apparently for some clue to it. "Well, I see our mis'sess and a soldier—a-ha-a-wk!"

"D—the boy!" said Gabriel.

"'Tis only my manner, Mister Oak, if ye'll excuse it," said Cain Ball, looking reproachfully at Oak, with eyes drenched in their own dew.

"Here's some cider for him—that'll cure his throat," said Jan Coggan, lifting a flagon of cider, pulling out the cork, and applying the hole to Cainy's mouth; Joseph Poorgrass, in the meantime, beginning to think apprehensively of the serious consequences that would follow Cainy Ball's strangulation in his cough, and the history of his Bath adventure dying with him.

"For my poor self, I always say 'please God,' afore I do anything," said Joseph, in an unboastful voice; "and so should you, Cain Ball. 'Tis a great safeguard, and might perhaps save you from being choked to death some day."

Mr. Coggan poured the liquor with unstinted liberality at the suffering Cain's circular mouth; half of it running down the side of the flagon, and half of what reached his mouth running down outside his throat, and half of what ran in going the wrong way, and being coughed and sneezed around the persons of the gathered reapers in the form of a rarefied cider fog, which for a moment hung in the sunny air like a small exhalation.

"There's a great clumsy sneeze! Why can't ye have better manners, you young dog!" said Coggan, withdrawing the flagon.

"The cider went up my nose!" cried Cainy, as soon as he could speak; "and now 'tis gone down my neck, and into my poor dumb felon, and over my shiny buttons and all my best cloze!"

"The pore lad's cough is terrible unfortunate," said Matthew Moon. "And a great history on hand, too. Bump his back, shepherd."

"'Tis my natur," mourned Cain. "Mother says I always was so excitable when my feelings were worked up to a point."

"True, true," said Joseph Poorgrass. "The Balls were always a very excitable family. I knowed the boy's grandfather—a truly nervous and modest man, even to genteel refinement. 'Twas blush, blush with him, almost as much as 'tis with me—not but that 'tis a fault in me."

"Not at all, Master Poorgrass," said Coggan. "'Tis a very noble quality in ye."

"Heh-heh! well, I wish to noise nothing abroad—nothing at all," murmured Poorgrass diffidently. "But we are born to things—that's true. Yet I would rather my trifle were hid; though, perhaps, a high nature is a little high, and at my birth all things were possible to my Maker and he may have begudged no gifts. . . . But under your bushel, Joseph! under your bushel with you! A strange desire, neighbours, this desire to hide, and no praise due. Yet there is a Sermon on the Mount with a calendar of the blessed at the head, and certain meek men may be named therein."

"Cainy's grandfather was a very clever man," said Matthew Moon. "Invented an apple-tree out of his own head, which is called by his name to this day—the Early Ball. You know 'em, Jan? A Quarrington grafted on a Tom Putt, and a Rathe-ripe upon top o' that again. 'Tis trew a' used to bide about in a public-house in a way he had no business to by rights, but there—'a were a very clever man in the sense of the term."

"Now, then," said Gabriel impatiently, "what did you see, Cain?"

"I seed our mis'ess go into a sort of a park place, where there's seats, and shrubs, and flowers, arm-in-crook with a soldier," continued Cainy firmly, and with a dim sense that his words were very effective as regarded Gabriel's emo-

tions. "And I think the soldier was Sergeant Troy. And they sat there together for more than half-an-hour, talking moving things, and she once was crying almost to death. And when they came out her eyes were shining and she was as white as a lily; and they looked into one another's faces, as desperately friendly as a man and woman can be."

"Gabriel's features seemed to get thinner. "Well, what did you see besides?"

"Oh, all sorts."

"White as a lily? You are sure 'twas she?"

"Yes."

"Well, what besides?"

"Great glass windows in the shops, and great clouds in the sky, full of rain, and old wooden trees in the country round."

"You stun-poll! What will ye say next!" said Coggan.

"Let en alone," interposed Joseph Poorgrass. "The boy's maning is that the sky and the earth in the kingdom of Bath is not altogether different from ours here. 'Tis for our good to gain knowledge of strange cities, and as such the boy's words should be suffered, so to speak it."

"And the people of Bath," continued Cain, "never need to light their fires except as a luxury, for the water springs up out of the earth ready boiled for use."

"'Tis true as the light," testified Matthew Moon. "I've heard other navigators say the same thing."

"They drink nothing else there," said Cain, "and seem to enjoy it, to see how they swaller it down."

"Well, it seems a barbarous practice enough to us, but I daresay the natives think nothing of it," said Matthew.

"And don't victuals spring up as well as drink?" asked Coggan, twirling his eye.

"No—I own to a blot there in Bath—a true blot. God didn't provide 'em with victuals as well as drink, and 'twas a drawback I couldn't get over at all."

"Well 'tis a curious place, to say the least," observed Moon; "and it must be a curious people that live therein."

"Miss Everdene and the soldier were walking about together, you say?" said Gabriel, returning to the group.

"Ay, and she wore a beautiful gold-colour silk gown, trimmed with black lace, that would have stood alone without legs inside if required. 'Twas a very winsome sight; and her hair was brushed

splendid. And when the sun shone upon the bright gown and his red coat — my! how handsome they looked. You could see 'em all the length of the street."

"And then what?" murmured Gabriel.

"And then I went into Griffin's to have my boots hobbled, and then I went to Riggy's batty-cake shop, and asked 'em for a penneth of the cheapest and nicest stales, that were all but blue-mouldy but not quite. And whilst I was chawing 'em down I walked on and seed a clock with a face as big as a baking-trendle —"

"But that's nothing to do with mistress!"

"I'm coming to that, if you'll leave me alone, Mister Oak!" remonstrated Cainy. "If you excites me, perhaps you'll bring on my cough, and then I shan't be able to tell ye nothing."

"Yes — let him tell it his own way," said Coggan.

Gabriel settled into a despairing attitude of patience, and Cainy went on: —

"And there were great large houses, and more people all the week long than at Weatherbury club-walking on White Tuesdays. And I went to grand churches and chapels. And how the parson would pray! Yes, he would kneel down, and put up his hands together, and make the holy gold rings on his fingers gleam and twinkle in yer eyes, that he'd earned by praying so excellent well! — Ah yes, I wish I lived there."

"Our poor Parson Thirdly can't get no money to buy such rings," said Matthew Moon thoughtfully. "And as good a man as ever walked. I don't believe poor Thirdly have a single one, even of humblest tin or copper. Such a great ornament as they'd be to him on a dull afternoon, when he's up in the pulpit lighted by the wax candles! But 'tis impossible, poor man. Ah, to think how unequal things be."

"Perhaps he's made of different stuff than to wear 'em," said Gabriel, grimly. "Well, that's enough of this. Go on, Cainy — quick."

"Oh — and the new style of parsons wear moustaches and long beards," continued the illustrious traveller, "and look like Moses and Aaron complete, and make we fokes in the congregation feel all over like the children of Israel."

"A very right feeling — very," said Joseph Poorgrass.

"And there's two religions going on in the nation now — High Church and High Chapel. And, thinks I, I'll play fair; so

I went to High Church in the morning, and High Chapel in the afternoon."

"A right and proper boy," said Joseph Poorgrass.

"Well, at High Church they pray singing, and believe in all the colours of the rainbow; and at High Chapel they pray preaching, and believe in drab and white-wash only. And then — I didn't see no more of Miss Everdene at all."

"Why didn't you say so before, then?" exclaimed Oak, with much disappointment.

"Ah," said Matthew Moon, "she'll wish her cake dough if so be she's over intimate with that man."

"She's not over intimate with him," said Gabriel, indignantly.

"She would know better," said Coggan. "Our mis'ess has too much sense under those knots of black hair to do such a mad thing."

"You see, he's not a coarse ignorant man, for he was well brought up," said Matthew, dubiously. "'Twas only wildness that made him a soldier, and maids rather like your man of sin."

"Now, Cain Ball," said Gabriel, restlessly, "can you swear in the most awful form that the woman you saw was Miss Everdene?"

"Cain Ball, you are no longer a babe and suckling," said Joseph in the sepulchral tone the circumstances demanded, "and you know what taking an oath is. 'Tis a horrible testament, mind ye, which you say and seal with your blood-stone, and the prophet Matthew tells us that on whomsoever it shall fall it will grind him to powder. Now, before all the work-folk here assembled can you swear to your word as the shepherd asks ye?"

"Please no, Mister Oak!" said Cainy, looking from one to the other with great uneasiness at the spiritual magnitude of the position. "I don't mind saying 'tis true, but I don't like to say 'tis d — true, if that's what you mane."

"Cain, Cain, how can you!" said Joseph sternly. "You are asked to swear in a holy manner, and you swear like wicked Shimei, the son of Gera, who cursed as he came. Young man, fie!"

"No, I don't! 'Tis you want to squander a poor boy's soul, Joseph Poorgrass — that's what 'tis!" said Cain, beginning to cry. "All I mane is that in common truth 'twas Miss Everdene and Sergeant Troy, but in the horrible so-help-me truth that ye want to make of it perhaps 'twas somebody else."

"There's no getting at the rights of it," said Gabriel, turning to his work.

"Cain Ball, you'll come to a bit of bread!" groaned Joseph Poorgrass.

Then the reapers' hooks were flourished again, and the old sounds went on. Gabriel, without making any pretence of being lively, did nothing to show that he was particularly dull. However, Coggan knew pretty nearly how the land lay, and when they were in a nook together he said —

"Don't take on about her, Gabriel. What difference does it make whose sweetheart she is, since she can't be yours?"

"That's the very thing I say to myself," said Gabriel.

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THE CONVENT OF SAN MARCO.

— THE PAINTER.

AMONG all the many historical places, sacred by right of the feet that have trodden them, and the thoughts that have taken origin within them, which attract the spectator in the storied city of Florence, there is not one, perhaps, more interesting or attractive than the convent of St. Mark, now, by a necessity of state which some approve and some condemn, emptied of its traditionary inhabitants. No black and white monk now bars smilingly to profane feminine feet the entrance to the sunny cloister: no brethren of Saint Dominic inhabit the hushed and empty cells. Chapter-house, refectory, library, all lie vacant and open — a museum for the state — a blank piece of public property, open to any chance comer. It would be churlish to complain of a freedom which makes so interesting a place known to the many; but it is almost impossible not to regret the entire disappearance of the old possessors, the preachers of many a fervent age, the eloquent Order which in this very cloister produced so great an example of the orator's undying power. Savonarola's convent, we cannot but feel, might have been one of the few spared by the exigencies of public poverty, that most strenuous of all reformers. On this point, however, whatever may be the stranger's regrets, Italy of course must be the final judge, as we have all been in our day; and Italy has at least the grace of accepting her position as art-guardian and custodian of the pre-

cious things of the past, a point in which other nations of the world have been less careful. San Marco is empty, swept, and garnished; but at least it is left in perfect good order, and watched over as becomes its importance in the history of Florence and in that of Art. What stirring scenes, and what still ones, these old walls have seen, disguising their antiquity as they do — but as scarcely any building of their date could do in England — by the harmony of everything around, the homogeneous character of the town! It would be affectation for any observer brought up in the faith, and bred in the atmosphere, of Gothic art, to pretend to any admiration of the external aspect of the ordinary Italian basilica. There is nothing in these buildings except their associations, and sometimes the wealth and splendour of their decorations, pictorial or otherwise, to charm or impress eyes accustomed to Westminster and Notre Dame. The white convent walls shutting in everything that is remarkable within, in straight lines of blank inclosure, are scarcely less interesting outside than is the lofty gable-end which forms the façade of most churches in Florence, whether clothed in shining lines of marble or rugged coat of plaster. The church of San Marco has not even the distinction of this superficial splendour or squalor. It does not appeal to the sympathy of the beholder, as so many Florentine churches did a few years ago, and as the cathedral still does with its stripped and unsightly façade; but stands fast in respectable completeness, looking out upon a sunshiny square, arranged into the smooth prettiness of a very ordinary garden by the new spirit of good order which has come upon Italy. It is difficult, in sight of the shrubs, and flowers, and grass-plats, the peaceable ordinary houses around, to realize that it was here that Savonarola preached to excited crowds, filling up every morsel of standing-ground; and that these homely convent walls, white and blank in the sunshine, were once besieged by mad Florence, wildly seeking the blood of the prophet who had not given it the miracle it sought. The place is as still now as monotonous peace and calm can make it. Some wrecks of faded pictures keep their places upon the walls, the priests chant their monotonous masses, the bad organ plays worse music — though this is melodious Italy, the country of song; and the only thing that touches the heart in this historical place is a sight that is common

in every parish church throughout almost all Catholic countries, at least throughout all Italy—the sight of the handful of homely people who in the midst of their work come in to say their prayers, or having a little leisure, sit down and muse in the soft and consecrated silence. I think no gorgeous *funzione*, no Pontifical High Mass, is half so affecting. Their faces are towards the altar, but nothing is doing there. What are they about? Not recalling the associations of the place, thinking of Savonarola, as we are; but musing upon what is far more close and intimate, their own daily trials and temptations, their difficulties, their anxieties. The coolness and dimness of the place, a refuge from the blazing sun without, now and then a monotonous chanting, or the little tinkle of the bell which rouses them from their thoughts for a moment, and bids every beholder bend a reverend knee in sympathy with what is going on somewhere behind those dim pillars—some Low Mass in an unseen chapel—all this forms a fit atmosphere around those musing souls. And that is the most interesting sight that is to be seen in San Marco, though the strangers who come from afar to visit Savonarola's church and dwelling-place stray about the side chapels and gaze at the pictures, and take little enough note of the unpicturesque devotion of to-day.

The history of the remarkable convent and church which has thus fallen into the blank uses of a museum on the one hand, and the commonplace routine of a parish on the other, has long ceased to be great; all that was most notable in it indeed—its virtual foundation, or rebuilding, when transferred to the Dominican order, its decoration, its tragic climax of power and closely following downfall—were all summed up within the fifteenth century. But it is one of the great charms of the storied cities of Italy that they make the fifteenth century (not to speak of ages still more remote) as yesterday to the spectator, placing him with a loving sympathy in the very heart of the past. I need not enter into the story of the events which gained to the Dominican order possession of San Marco, originally the property of an order of Silvestrini; but may sum them up here, in a few words. For various reasons, partly moral, partly political, a community of Dominicans had been banished to Fiesole, where they lived and longed for years, gazing at their Florence from among the olive gardens, and setting nought by all these

rural riches, and by the lovely prospect that enchanted their eyes daily, in comparison with the happiness of getting back again to their beloved town. The vicissitudes of their exile, and the connection of the brotherhood with the special tumults of the time may all be found in Padre Marchese's great work, "San Marco Illustrato," but are at once too detailed and too vague to be followed here. In process of time they were allowed to descend the hill to San Giorgio on the other side of the Arno, which was still a partial banishment; and at last regained popularity and influence so completely that the naughty Silvestrini were compelled to relinquish their larger house, and marched out of San Marco aggrieved and reluctant across the bridge, while the Reformed Dominicans, with joyful chanting of psalms, streamed across in procession to the new home, which was not only a commodious habitation, but a prize of virtue. Perhaps this kind of transfer was not exactly the way to make the brethren love each other; but history says nothing more of the Silvestrini. The Dominicans do not seem to have had, immediately at least, so pleasant a removing as they hoped, for their new convent was dilapidated, and scarcely inhabitable. Cosmo de Medici, the first great chief of that ambitious family, the wily and wise founder of its fortunes, the Pater Patriæ, whom Florence not long before had summoned back to guide and rule the turbulent city, took the case of the monks in hand. He rebuilt their convent for them, while they encamped in huts and watched over the work. And when it was so far completed as to be habitable, royal Cosmo gave a commission to a certain monk among them skilled in such work, to decorate with pictures the new walls. These decorations, and the gentle, simple, uneventful life of this monk and his brethren, furnish a soft prelude to the stormy strain of further story of which San Marco was to be the subject. Its period of fame and greatness, destined to conclude in thunders of excommunication, in more tangible thunders of assault and siege, in popular violence, tragic anguish, and destruction, began thus with flutings of angels, with soft triumphs of art, with such serene, sweet quiet, and beautiful industry, as may be exercised, who knows, in the outer courts of heaven itself. A stranger introduction to the passion and struggle of Savonarola's prophetic career could scarcely be, than that which is con-

tained in this gentle chapter of conventual existence, at its fairest and brightest, which no one can ignore who steps across the storied threshold of San Marco, and is led to the grave silence of Prior Girolamo's cell between two lines of walls from which soft faces look at him like benedictions, fresh (or so it seems) from Angelico's tender hand.

The painter whom we know by this name, which is not his name any more than it is the name of the Angelical doctor, St. Thomas Aquinas, or the Angelical father, Saint Francis, was born in the neighbourhood of Florence, in (as Padre Marchese describes it) the fertile and fair province of Mugello—in the latter part of the fourteenth century. His name was Guido di Pietro; Guido, the son of Peter—evidently not with any further distinction of lineage. Where he studied his divine art, or by whom he was taught, is not known. Vasari suggests that he was a pupil of Starnina, and Eyre and Cavalcaselle imagine that more likely the Starnina traditions came to him through Masolino or Masaccio, and that he formed his style upon that of Orcagna. These, however, do not seem much more than conjectures, and the only facts known of his simple history are that in 1407, when he was twenty, his brother and he, taking the names of Benedetto and Giovanni, together entered the Dominican order in the convent at Fiesole. This community had a troubled life for some years, and the young disciples were sent to Cortona, where there are various pictures which testify to the fact that Fra Giovanni was already a painter of no mean power. All the dates however of this early part of his life are confused, and the story uncertain; for indeed it is probable no one knew that the young monk was to become the Angelican painter, the glory of his convent, and one of the wonders of his age. What is certain, however, is, that he returned from Cortona, and lived for many years in the convent of San Dominico, half way up to Fiesole, upon the sunny slopes where nothing ventures to grow that does not bear fruit; where flowers are weeds, and roses form the hedges, and the lovely cloudy foliage of the olive affords both shade and wealth. There is not very much record of the painter in all those silent cloistered years. Books which he is said to have illuminated with exquisite grace and skill are doubtfully appropriated by critics to his brother or to humbler workers of their school, and the few pictures which seem

to belong to this period have been injured in some cases, and in others destroyed. Fra Giovanni performed all his monastic duties with the devotion of the humblest brother; and lived little known, without troubling himself about fame, watching no doubt the nightly sunsets and moonrises over that glorious Val d'Arno which shone and slumbered at his feet, and noting silently how the mountain watchers stood round about, and the little Tuscan hills on a closer level stretched their vine garlands like hands each to the other, and drew near, a wistful friendly band, to see what Florence was doing. Florence, heart and soul of all, lay under him, as he took his moonlight meditative stroll on the terrace or gazed and mused out of his narrow window. One can fancy that the composition of that lovely landscape stole into the painter's eye and worked itself into his works, in almost all of which some group of reverent spectators, Dominican brethren with rapt faces, or saintly women, or angel lookers-on more ethereal still, stand by and watch with adoring awe the sacred mysteries transacted in their presence, with something of the same deep calm and hush which breathes about the blue spectator heights round the City of Flowers. What Fra Giovanni saw was not what we see. No noble dome had yet crowned the Cathedral, and Giotto's Campanile, divinely tall, fair and light as a lily stalk, had not yet thrown itself up into mid air; nothing but the rugged grace of the old Tower of the Signoria—contrasting now in picturesque characteristic Tuscan humanity with the more heavenly creations that rival it—raised up then its protecting standard from the lower level of ancient domes and lofty houses, soaring above the Bargello and the Badia, in the days of the Angelical painter. But there was enough in this, with all its summer hazes and wintry brightness, with the shadows that flit over the wide landscape like some divine breath, and the broad, dazzling, rejoicing glow of the Italian sun, and Arno glimmering through the midst like a silver thread, and white castles shining further and further off in the blue distance up to the very skirt of Apennine, to inspire his genius. In those days men said little about Nature, and did not even love her, the critics think—rather had to find out how to love her, when modern civilization came to teach them how. But if Fra Giovanni, pacing his solitary walk upon that mount of vision at San Dominico, evening after

evening, year after year, did not note those lights and shades and atmospheric changes, and lay up in his still soul a hundred variations of sweet colour, soft glooms, and heavenly shadows, then it is hard to think where he got his lore, and harder still that Heaven should be so prodigal of a training which was not put to use. Heaven is still prodigal, and nature tints her pallet with as many hues as ever; but there is no Angelical painter at the windows of San Dominico to take advantage of them now.

The Florence to which these monks were so eager to return, and where eventually they came, carrying their treasures in procession, making the narrow hill-side ways resound with psalms, and winding in long trains of black and white through the streets of their regained home — was at that time, amid all its other tumults and agitations (and these were neither few nor light), in the full possession of that art-culture which lasted as long as there was genius to keep it up, and which has made the city now one of the treasures of the world. The advent of a new painter was still something to stir the minds of a people who had not so many ages before called one of their streets "Allegrì," because of the joy and pride of the town over Cimabue's sad Madonna. There is little evidence, however, that Florence knew much of the monk's work, who, as yet, was chiefly distinguished, it would seem, as a miniaturist and painter of beautiful manuscripts. But wily Cosmo, the father of his country, could have done few things more popular, and likely to enhance his reputation, than his liberality in thus encouraging and developing another genius for the delight and credit of the city. Almost before the cloister was finished, historians suppose, Fra Giovanni had got his hands on the smooth white wall, so delightful to a painter's imagination. We do not pretend to determine the succession of his work, and say where he began; but it is to be supposed that the cloister and chapter-house, as first completed, would afford him his first opportunity. No doubt there were many mingled motives in that noble and fine eagerness to decorate and make beautiful their homes which possessed the minds of the men of that gorgeous age, whether in the world or the church. For the glory of God, for the glory of the convent and order, for the glory of Florence, which every Florentine sought with almost more than patriotic ardour — the passion of

patriotism gaining, as it were, in intensity when circumscribed in the extent of its object — the monks of San Marco must have felt a glow of generous pride in their growing gallery of unique and original pictures. The artist himself, however, worked with a simple unity of motive, little known either in that or any other age. He painted his pictures as he said his prayers, out of pure devotion. So far as we are informed, Fra Giovanni, of the order of Preachers, was no preacher by word or doctrine. He had another way of edifying the holy and convincing the sinner. He could not argue or exhort, but he could set before them the sweetest heaven that ever appeared to poetic vision, the tenderest friendly angels, the gentlest and loveliest of virgin mothers. Neither profit nor glory came to the monk in his convent. He began his work on his knees, appealing to his God for the inspiration that so great an undertaking required, and — carrying with him the *défauts de ses qualités*, as all men of primitive virtue do — declined with gentle obstinacy to make any change or improvement after, in the works thus conceived under the influence of Heaven. While he was engaged in painting a crucifix, Vasari tells us the tears would run down his cheeks, in his vivid realization of the Divine suffering therein expressed. Thus it was with the full fervour of a man who feels himself at last entered upon the true mission of his life, and able, once and for all, to preach in the most acceptable way the truth that had been dumb within him, that the Angelical painter began his work. The soft and heavenly inspiration in it has never been questioned, and the mind of the looker-on, after these long centuries, can scarcely help expanding with a thrill of human sympathy to realize the profound and tender satisfaction of that gentle soul, thus enabled to paint his best, to preach his best, in the way God had endowed him for, with the additional happiness and favour of high heaven, that his lovely visions were to be the inheritance of his brethren and sons in the Church, the only succession an ecclesiastic could hope for.

It would appear, however, that the interior of San Marco must have been so soon ready for Fra Giovanni's beautifying hand, that he had but little time to expend himself on the cloisters which are now bright with the works of inferior artists. It would be difficult to convey to any one who has not stood within an Ital-

ian cloister, and felt the warm brightness of the pictured walls cheer his eyes and his heart, even when the painters have not been great, or the works very remarkable—the special charm and sweetness of those frescoed decorations. The outer cloister of San Marco glows with pictures—not very fine, perhaps, yet with an interest of their own. There the stranger who has time, or cares to look at the illustrations of a past age, may read the story of Saint Antonino, who was distinguished as the good Archbishop of Florence, and canonized accordingly, to the great glory of his order, and honour of his convent. But Antonino himself was one of the brethren who stood by and watched and admired Fra Giovanni's work on the new walls. Was the first of all, perhaps, that crucifix which faces the spectator as he enters, at the end of the cloister, double expression of devotion to Christ crucified and Dominic his servant? It is the most important of Angelico's works in this outer inclosure. Our gentle painter could not paint agony or the passion of suffering, which was alien to his heavenly nature. The figure on the cross, here as elsewhere, is beautiful in youthful resignation and patience, the suffering Son of God, but a celestial symbol of depths into which the painter could not penetrate; but the kneeling figure, in the black and white robes of the order, which clasps the cross in a rapt embrace, and raises a face of earnest and all-absorbing worship to the Divine Sufferer, embodies the whole tradition of monastic life in its best aspect. No son of St. Dominic could look at that rapt figure without a clearer sense of the utter self-devotion required of himself as Dominic's follower, the annihilation of every lesser motive and lesser contemplation than that of the great sacrifice of Christianity—example and consecration of all sacrifices, which his vow bound him to follow and muse upon all his life through. This picture fills something of the same place as the blazon of a knightly house over its warlike gates is meant to do. It is the tradition, the glory, the meaning of the order all in one, as seen by Angelico's beauty-loving eyes, as well as by those stern, glowing eyes of Savonarola, who was to come; and perhaps even in their dull, ferocious, mistaken way by the Torquemados, who have brought St. Dominic to evil fame. For Christ, and Christ alone, counting no cost; thinking of nothing but conquering the world for Him; conceiving of no ad-

vance but by the spreading of His kingdom—yet, alas! with only every individual's narrow human notion of what that kingdom was, and which the way of spreading it. In Florence, happily, at that moment, the Reformed Dominicans, in the warmth of their revival, could accept the blazon of their Order thus set forth with all their hearts. They had renewed their dedication of themselves to that perpetual preaching of Christ's sacrifice and imitation of His self-renunciation, which was the highest meaning of their vows; and no doubt each obscure father, each musing humble novice in his white gown felt a glow of rapt enthusiasm as he watched the new picture grow into life, and found in the absorbed face of the holy founder of his Order, at once the inspiration and reflection of his own.

The other little pictures in this cloister which are pure Angelico are entirely conventual, addressed to the brethren, as was natural in this, the centre of their common existence. Peter Martyr, one of their most distinguished saints, stands over one doorway, finger on lip suggesting the silence that befitted a grave community devoted to the highest studies and reflections. Over another door are two Dominican brethren, receiving (it is the guest-chamber of the monastery) the Redeemer Himself, worn with travel, to their hospitable shelter. Curiously enough, the beautiful, gentle, young traveller, with his pilgrim's hat falling from his golden curls, which is the best representation our gentle Angelico could make—always angelical, like his name—of the Lord of life, might almost have served as model for that other beautiful, gentle, young peasant Christ, whom another great painter, late in this nineteenth century, has given forth to us as all he knows of the central figure of the world's history. Mr. Holman Hunt has less excuse than the mild monk whose very gospel was beauty, for so strange a failure in conception. To some has been given the power to make Christ, to others contadini, as the two rival sculptors said to each other. Angelico rarely advances above this low ideal. His angels are lovely beyond description; he understood the unity of a creature more ethereal than flesh and blood, yet made up of soft submission, obedience, devotedness—beautiful human qualities; but the contact of the human with the divine was beyond him—as, indeed, might be said of most painters. There can be little doubt that this difficulty of

representing anything that could satisfy the mind as God in the aspect of full-grown man, has helped more than anything else to give to the group of the Mother and the Child such universal acceptance in the realms of art—a pictorial necessity thus lending its aid in the fixing of dogma, and still more in the unanimous involuntary bias given to devotion. The Christ-child has proved within the powers of many painters; for, indeed, there is something of the infinite in every child—unfathomable possibilities, the boundless charm of the unrealized, in which everything may be, while yet nothing certainly is. But who has ever painted the Christ-man? unless we may take the pathetic shadow of that sorrowful head in Leonardo's ruined Cenacolo—the very imperfection of which helps us to see a certain burdened divinity in its melancholy lines—for success. Sorely burdened indeed, and sad to death, is that countenance, which is the only one we can think of which bears anything of the dignity of Godhead in the looks of man; but it is very different from the beautiful, weak, fatigued young countryman who is so often presented to us as the very effigy of Him who is the King and Saviour of humanity, as well as the Lamb of God.

Angelico never, or very rarely, got beyond this gentle ideal of suffering innocence, enduring with unalterable patience. Perhaps in his "Scourging" there may be a gleam of higher meaning, or in that crowned figure which crowns the humble mother; but the type is always the same. It is curious to note how this incapacity works. In the great picture in the chapter-house of San Marco, which opens from this cloister, and is the most important single work in the convent, the spectator merely glances at the figure on the cross, which ought to be the centre of the picture. It really counts for nothing in the composition. The attendant saints are wonderfully noble, and full of varied expression; but the great act which attracts their gaze is little more than a conventional emblem of that event; the Virgin, it is true, swoons at the foot of the cross, but the spectator sees no reason except a historical one for her swoon, for the cross itself is faint and secondary, curiously behind the level of Ambrose, and Augustine, and Francis, who look up with faces full of life at that mysterious abstraction. Underneath that solemn assembly of fathers and founders—for almost all are heads of orders, except the Medical saints Cosmo and Damian, who

hold their place there in compliment to the Medici—the monks of San Marco have deliberated for four centuries. There, no doubt, Pope Eugenius sat with the pictured glory over him; there Savonarola presided over his followers, and encouraged himself and them with revelations and prophecy. If we may venture to interpose among such historic memories a scene of loftiest fiction, more vivid than history—there the Prior of San Marco received the noble Florentine woman, Romola. The picture survives everything—long ages of peace, brief storms of violence in which moments count for years; and again the silent ages—quiet, tranquillity, monotony, tedium. Jerome and Augustine, Francis and Dominic, with faces more real than our own, have carried on a perpetual adoration ever since, and never drooped or failed.

The new dormitory, which Cosmo, the father of his country, and his architect, Michelozzi, built for the monks, does not seem originally to have been of the character which we usually assign to a convent. It was one large room, like a ward in a hospital—like the long chamber in Eton College—with a row of small arched windows on either side, each of which apparently gave a little light and a limited span of space to the monk whose bed flanked the window. To decorate this large, bare room seems to have been the Angelical painter's next grand piece of work. Other hands besides his were engaged upon it. His brother, Fra Benedetto, took some of the subjects in hand—subjects, alas, passed by now by the spectator, who takes but little interest in Benedetto's renderings. How pleasant is the imagination thus conjured up! The bustling pleased community settling itself in its new house, arranging its homely crucifixes, its few books, its tables for work, parchments and ink and colours for its illuminated manuscripts, great branch of monkish industry; here an active brother leaving a little room in the beehive, going out upon the business of the convent, aiding or watching the workmen outside; here a homely Fra Predicatore meditating in his corner, with what quiet was possible, his sermon for next fast or festa; there, bending over their work with fine brush and careful eye, the illuminators, the writers, elaborating their perfect manuscript; and all the while—tempting many a glance, many a criticism, many a whispered communication—the picture going

on, in which one special brother or other must have taken a lively, jealous interest, seeing it was his special corner which was being thus illustrated! One wonders if the monks were jealous on whose bit of wall Benedetto worked instead of Giovanni — or whether there might be a party in the convent who considered Giovanni an over-rated brother, and believed Benedetto to have quite as good a right to the title of "Angelico"? For their own sakes let us hope it was so, and that good Fra Benedetto painted for his own set; while at the same time there can be little doubt that the difference between him and his brother would be much less strongly marked than now. Thus all together the community carried on its existence. Perhaps a humorous recollection of the hum which must have reached him as he stood painting on his little scaffolding, induced the painter to plan that warning figure of the martyred Peter over the doorway below, serious, with finger on his lip; for it could scarcely be in human nature that all those friars with consciences void of offence, approved of by Pope and people — a new house built for them, warm with the light of princely favour; and the sunshine shining in through all those arched windows, throwing patches of brightness over the new-laid tiles — and the Florentine air, gay with summer, making merry like ethereal wine their Tuscan souls — should have kept silence like melancholy Trappists of a later degenerate age. To be a monk in those days was to be a busy, well-occupied, and useful man, in no way shut out from nature. I should like to have stepped into that long room when the bell called them all forth to chapel, and noted where Angelico put down his brush, how the scribe paused in the midst of a letter, and the illuminator in a gorgeous golden drapery, and the preacher with a sentence half ended — and nothing but the patches of sunshine, and the idle tools held possession of the place. No thought then of thunders which should shake all Florence, of prophecies and prophets; nothing but gentle industry, calm work — that calmest work which leaves the artist so much time for gentle musing, for growth of skill, poetic thoughtfulness. And when the scaffolding was removed, and another and another picture fully disclosed in delicate sweet freshness of colour — soft fair faces looking out of the blank wall, clothing them with good company, with solace and protection — what a flutter of

pleasure must have stolen through the brotherhood, what pleasant excitement, what critical discussions, fine taste, enlightened and superior, against simple enthusiasm! It is almost impossible not to fear that there must have been some conflict of feeling between the brother who had but a saintly Annunciation, too like the public and common property of that picture called the "Capo le Scale" and him who was blest with the more striking subject of the "Scourging," so quaint and fine; or him who proudly felt himself the possessor of that picturesque glimpse into the invisible — the opened gates of Limbo, with the father of mankind pressing to the Saviour's feet. Happy monks, busy and peaceable! half of them no doubt at heart believed that his own beautiful page, decked by many a gorgeous king and golden saint, would last as long as the picture; and so they have done, as you may see in the glass-cases in the library, where all those lovely chorales and books of prayer are preserved; but not like Angelico. There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the stars.

It does not seem to be known at what time this large dormitory was divided, as we see it now, in a manner which still more closely recalls to us the boys' rooms in a good "house" in Eton, into separate cells. No doubt it is more dignified, more conventual, more likely to have promoted the serious quiet which ought to belong to monastic life; but one cannot help feeling that here and there a friendly, simple-minded brother must have regretted the change. Each cell has its own little secluded window, deep in the wall, its own patch of sunshine, its own picture. There is no fireplace, or other means of warming the little chamber between its thick walls; but no doubt then, as now, the monks had their scaldinos full of wood embers, the poor Italian's immemorial way of warming himself. And between the window and the wall, on the left side, is the picture — dim — often but dimly seen, faded out of its past glory — sometimes less like a picture at all than some celestial shadow on the grey old wall, some sweet phantasmagoria of lovely things that have passed there, and cannot be quite effaced from the very stones that once saw them. For my own part, I turn from all Angelico's more perfect efforts, from the "Madonna della Stella," glistening in gold, which is so dear to the traveller, and all the well-preserved examples with their glittering

backgrounds, to those heavenly shadows in the empty cells — scratched, defaced, and faded as so many of them are. The gentle old monk comes near to the modern spectator, the pilgrim who has crossed hills and seas to see all that is left of what was done in such a broad and spontaneous flood of inspiration. Those saints, with their devout looks, the musing Virgin, the rapt Dominic; those sweet spectator angels, so tenderly curious, sympathetic, wistful, serviceable; those lovely soft embodiments of womanly humbleness, yet exultation, the Celestial Mother bending to receive her crown. They are not pictures, but visions painted on the dim conscious air not by vulgar colour and pencil, but by prayers and gentle thoughts.

There are two other separate cells in San Marco more important than these, yet closely belonging to this same early and peaceful chapter of the convent's story. We do not speak of the line of little chambers each blazoned with a copy of the crucifix below in the cloister with the kneeling St. Dominic, which are called the cells of the *Giovinati* or Novices, and which conclude in the sacred spot where Savonarola's great existence passed. That is a totally different period of the tale, requiring different treatment, and calling forth other emotions. We do not look that way in this preliminary sketch, but rather turn to the other hand where Saint Antonino lived as Archbishop, and where still some relics of him remain, glorious vestments of cloth of gold beside the hair shirt, instrument of deepest mortification; and to the little chamber which it is reported Cosmo de Medici built for himself, and where he came when he wished to discourse in quiet with the Archbishop, whose shrewd, acute, and somewhat humorous countenance looks down upon us from the wall. This chamber is adorned with one of Angelico's finest works, "The Adoration of the Magi," a noble composition, and has besides in a niche a pathetic Christ painted over a little altar sunk in the deep wall. Here Cosmo came to consult with his Archbishop (the best, they say, that Florence had then had), and, in earlier days, to talk to his Angelical painter as the works went on, which Cosmo was wise to see would throw some gleam of fame upon himself as well as on the convent. With all the monks together in the long room where Angelico painted his frescoes it may well be imagined that this place of

retirement was essential; and when that long-headed and far-seeing father of his country had been taken, no doubt with an admiring following of monks, to see the last new picture, as one after another was completed, and had given his opinion and the praise which was expected of him, no doubt both painter and prince were glad of the quiet retirement where they could talk over what remained to do, and plan perhaps a greater work here and there — the throned Madonna in the corridor, with again the Medician saints, holy physicians, Cosmo and Damian, at her feet — or discuss the hopeful pupils whom Angelico was training, Benozzo Gozzoli, for instance, thereafter known to fame.

All is peaceful, tranquil, softly melodious in this beginning of the conventual existence. Pope Eugenius himself came, at the instance of the Pater Patriæ, to consecrate the new-built house, and lived in these very rooms, to the glory and pride of the community. Thus everything set out in an ideal circle of goodness and graciousness; a majestic Pope, humble enough to dwell in the very cloister with the Dominicans, blessing their home for them; a wise prince coming on frequent visits, half living among them, with a cell called by his name where he might talk with his monkish friends; a great painter working lowly and busy among the humblest of the brethren, taking no state upon him — though a great painter was as a prince in art-loving Florence; and when the time to give San Marco the highest of honours came, another brother taken from among them to be Archbishop of the great city; while all the time those pictures, for which princes would have striven, grew at each monk's bedhead, his dear especial property, gladdening his eyes and watching over his slumbers. Was there ever a more genial, peaceful beginning, a more prosperous, pleasant house?

The way in which Antonino came to be Archbishop is very characteristic, too. At the period of his visit, no doubt, Pope Eugenius learned to know Angelico, and to admire the works which he must have seen growing under the master's hand; nor could he have failed to know the devotion of which those pictures were the expressive language, the intense celestial piety of the modest Frate. Accordingly, when the Pope went back to Rome he called the Angelical painter to him to execute some work there, and with the primitive certainty of his age that excel-

lence in one thing must mean excellence in all, offered to Fra Giovanni the vacant see if Florence. Modest Fra Giovanni knew that, though it was in him to paint, it was not in him to govern monks and men, to steer his way through politics and public questions, and rule a self-opinionated race like those hard-headed Tuscans. He told the head of the Church that this was not his vocation, but that in his convent there was another Frate whose shoulders were equal to the burden. The Pope took his advice, as any calif in story might have taken the recommendation of a newly chosen vizier; such things were possible in primitive times; and Antonino was forthwith called out of his cell, and from simple monk was made Archbishop, his character, there is little doubt, being well enough known to give force to Angelico's representation in his favour. This event would seem to have happened in the year 1445, three years after the visit of Eugenius to San Marco, and it seems doubtful whether Angelico ever returned to Florence after his comrade's elevation to this dignity. He stayed and painted in Rome till the death of Eugenius — then appeared a little while in Orvieto, where he seems to have been accompanied by his pupil Benozzo, and then returned to Rome to execute some commissions for the new Pope Nicholas. San Marco had been finished before this, with greater pomp and beauty than I have attempted to tell; for the great altarpiece has gone out of the church, and other works have fallen into decay or have been removed, and now dwell, dimmed by restoration and cleaning, in the academy of the Belli Arti, where it is not my business to follow them, my interest lying in San Marco only. At Rome the gentle Angelico died, having painted to the end of his life with all the freshness of youth. He was fifty when he came down the slopes from Fiesole, singing among his brethren, to make his new convent beautiful; he was sixty-eight when he died at Rome, but with no failing strength or skill. The Angelical painter lies not in his own San Marco, but in the church of Santa Maria sopra Minerva at Rome; but all the same he lives in Florence within the walls he loved, in the cells he filled full of beauty and pensive celestial grace — and which now are dedicated to him, and hold his memory fresh as in a shrine; dedicated to him — and to one other memory as different from his as morning is from evening.

Few people are equally interested in the two spirits which dwell within the empty convent; to some Angelico is all its past contains — to some Savonarola; but both are full of the highest meaning, and the one does not interfere with the other. The prophet-martyr holds a distinct place from that of the painter-monk. The two stories are separate, one sweet and soft as the "hidden brook" in the "leafy month of June," with the sound of which the poet consoles his breathless reader after straining his nerves to awe and terror. Like Handel's Pastoral Symphony piping under the moonlight, amid the dewy fields, full of heavenly subdued gladness and triumph, is the prelude which this gentle chapter of art and peace makes to the tragedy to follow. Angelico, with all his skill, prepared and made beautiful the house in which — with aims more splendid than his and a mark more high, but not more devout or pure — another Frate was to bring art and beauty to the tribunal of Christ and judge them, as Angelico himself, had his painter-heart permitted him, would have done as stoutly, rejecting the loveliness that was against God's ways and laws no less than Savonarola. Their ways of serving were different, their inspiration the same.

The traditions of the Angelical painter's pious life which Vasari, the primary authority on the subject, has left to us, are very beautiful. The simple old narrative of the first art-historian, always when it is possible to be so, is laudatory, and finally bursts into a strain of almost musical eulogy in the description of the gentle Frate. "He was of simple and pious manners," he tells us. "He shunned the worldly in all things, and during his pure and simple life was such a friend to the poor that I think his soul must be now in heaven. He painted incessantly, but never would lay his hand to any subject not saintly. He might have had wealth, but he scorned it, and used to say that true riches are to be found in contentment. He might have ruled over many, but would not, saying that obedience was easier and less liable to error. He might have enjoyed dignities among his brethren, and beyond. He disdained them, affirming that he sought for none other than might be consistent with a successful avoidance of Hell and the attainment of Paradise. Humane and sober, he lived chastely, avoiding the errors of the world, and he was wont to say that the pursuit of art

required rest and a life of holy thoughts; that he who illustrates the acts of Christ should live with Christ. He was never known to indulge in anger with his brethren — a great, and to my opinion all but unattainable, quality; and he never admonished but with a smile. With wonderful kindness he would tell those who sought his work, that if they got the consent of the prior he should not fail. . . . He never retouched or altered anything he had once finished, but left it as it had turned out, the will of God being that it should be so." Such is the touching picture which the old biographer of painters has left to us. His facts it seems probable (or so at least Padre Marchese thinks, the living historian of the order) came from one of the brotherhood of San Marco, Fra Eustatius, an eminent miniaturist of the convent. These details, vague though they are, bring before us the gentle painter — peaceable, modest, kind, yet endowed with a gentle obstinacy, and limited, as is natural to a monk, within the strait horizon of his community. It is told of him that when invited to breakfast with Pope Nicholas, the simple-minded brother was uneasy not to be able to ask his prior's permission to eat meat, the prior being for him a greater authority than the Pope, in whose hand (Angelico forgot) was the primary power of all indulgences. There could not be a better instance of the soft, submissive, almost domestic narrowness of the great painter, like a child from home, to whom the licence given by a king would have no such reassuring authority as the permission of father or mother. This beautiful narrow-mindedness — for in such a case it is permissible to unite the two words — told, however, on a more extended scale even on his genius. The Angelical monk was as incapable of understanding evil as a child. His atmosphere was innocence, holiness, and purity. To pure and holy persons he could give a noble and beautiful individuality; but absolute ugliness, grotesque and unreal, was all the notion he had of the wicked. To his cloistered soul the higher mystery of beautiful evil was unknown, and his simple nature ignored the many shades of that pathetic side of moral downfall in which an unsuccessful struggle has preceded destruction. He had no pity for, because he had no knowledge of, no more than a child, the agony of failure, or those faint tints of difference which sometimes separate the victors from the vanquished. While the fair circle of the saved glide,

dancing in a ring, into the flowery gardens of Paradise — a very "Decameron" group of holy joy, in his great "Last Judgment" the lost fly hopeless to the depths of hell, ugly, distorted, without a redeeming feature. It was his primitive way of representing evil — hideous, repulsive, as to his mind it could not but appear. He loathed ugliness as he loathed vice, and what so natural as that they should go together? Fra Giovanni showed his impartiality by mingling among his groups of the lost, here and there, a mitred bishop and cowed monk, to show that even a profession of religion was not infallible: but he had not the higher impartiality of permitting to those huddled masses any comeliness or charm of sorrow, but damned them frankly as a child does, and in his innocence knew no ruth.

Thus ends the first chapter of the history of St. Mark's convent at Florence — a story without a discordant note in it, which has left nothing behind but melodious memories and relics full of beauty. It is of this the stranger must chiefly think as he strays through the silent, empty cells, peopled only by saints and angels; until indeed he turns a corner of the dim corridor, and finds himself in presence of a mightier spirit. Let us leave the gentle preface in its holy calm. The historian may well pause before he begins the sterner but nobler strain.

From The Spectator.

"JOSH BILLINGS" IN ENGLISH.

EDUCATED Americans often express some astonishment at the liking displayed by the British public for the American "humourists," — men in whom, they say, they find little except some common-place extravagance and much bad spelling. With the exception of the "Heathen Chinee," which made an immense hit, and exercised a permanent influence on public opinion, they do not, we are told, genuinely admire any of the comic productions Englishmen find so racy. They prefer Mr. Lowell's serious poems, which, sweet as they are, will scarcely live, to the "Biglow Papers," which will last as long as their dialect remains intelligible; scarcely estimate Leland at English valuation, wonder at the fuss made about Mark Twain, and hold Artemus Ward to have been a low comedian. As the Americans are, in their way, more hu-

morous than the English, and as they produce these professional humourists, this want of appreciation of them would be hard to understand, or even to admit, were it not visible also among the Scotch, half of whom are full of a racy humour which the other half seem unable to comprehend. We never met a Scotchman yet — and we have tried the experiment several times — who fully enjoyed Artemus Ward, or understood why the absurd incongruity of his sayings with the shrewdness embodied in his thought, made Englishmen shake with laughter such as no English humour seemed in any equal degree to provoke. There must be two publics in America, just as there are in Scotland, and one of them despises the laughter which the other enjoys. One cause of the contempt is, we suspect, the artificiality into which all humourists who trade on their humour are apt to fall; another, the weariness of Americans of the shrewd sayings in which much of their humour is embodied; and a third, the preposterous use some of the comic aphorists make of bad spelling. Artemus Ward made his bad spelling funny, the absolute difference between the method of conjugating one expected and the method he tried, exciting of itself the sense of incongruity, which is the first cause of laughter; but his imitators have lost his art, such as it was, almost or quite completely. The person who calls himself "Josh Billings" has entirely. Chancing to take up the book at a railway-station, the writer decided during a ten minutes' run that "Josh Billings's" wit and humour was, on the whole, the most contemptibly vulgar trash he had ever had in his hand, — worse by many degrees than the worst failure of the old London Comic School, — quite as bad, in fact, as its cover, which represented a paunchy fool tumbling on his hands, and lifting with his feet a white hat with a mourning crape all round it. Having, however, to travel farther, and no other book being at hand, he tried to read it steadily, and discovered, in a painful half-hour, this curious fact. "Josh Billings" is the nickname of some unknown person, apparently well educated, with the mind, if one could imagine such a mind, of a Dissenting Sydney Smith. He has not, of course, the full power of the witty divine; he has injured such power as he has by using it up, apparently, as we guess from his dedication, to earn his bread, and his topics are usually inferior; but he has in a high degree the power Sydney Smith possessed

of saying odd things which, like common proverbs, embody in a line the experience of ages or the reasoning of a life. He can do nothing else. He cannot tell a story, or write a parody, or teach a lesson in politics, and the one faculty he possesses is overlaid, by his own or his original publisher's folly, till it is almost invisible. Half of the book is rubbish, the mere dregs of his better work, cooked up, we suppose, for a market which had enjoyed some of his racier oddities, and has kept on hoping for some more long after the supply was exhausted. About a tenth is made up of weak platitudes, and about a twentieth of Christian maxims of the most savagely orthodox type, which seem usually, with an exception or two, wretchedly out of place, though we must add, strange as it may be, they appear to have come from the inmost convictions of the writer, who has covered all alike — pious advice, common-place rubbish, keen epigrams, and "pawky" proverbs — in an impenetrable veil of bad spelling. What the object of this spelling can be we are utterly unable to discover. It is not comic, as Artemus Ward's often was. It is not intended to express any dialect, as Leland's was, or if it is, it does not succeed. It is not phonetic, it is not ingenious, it is, in fact, a motiveless absurdity, all the more to be condemned because such wit as "Josh Billings" possesses is entirely of the sub-allusive kind, which is so seldom liked except among the educated. The real man is not "Josh Billings," but to compare small things with great, an American Montaigne. This sentence, for instance, "We have made justice a luxury of civilization," is essentially of the Sydney-Smith type, and is not made more subtle, but only unintelligible, by ridiculous spelling. It would be hardly possible to express the truth that civilization has secured justice, but has not secured it to the poor, in a terser or more biting form, but its pithiness is just of the kind which a reader capable of spelling "is" as "iz" would never comprehend, any more than he would this curious and quite true observation in natural history, "Monkeys never grow any older in expression. A young monkey looks exactly like his grandpapa melted up and born again;" or this, "No man can be a healthy jester unless he has been nursed at the breast of wisdom," a sentence which contains the whole difference between the humour of a man like Sydney Smith or Charles Lamb and the humour of Mr. Lear.

Where, again, is the sense, not to say the taste or the propriety, of misspelling a fine sentence like this?—"Humour must fall out of a man's mouth like music out of a bobolink," which is intelligible only to those to whom bad spelling, and especially artificial bad spelling, is a mere cause of disgust. There is a world of wisdom in the saying, "It is easier to be a harmless dove than a decent serpent,"—that is, to be a man constitutionally outside temptation, than a man who, keenly feeling temptation, yet resists; but in what way is the wisdom flavoured by spelling a dove a "duv"? The bitter, worldly experience of this remark, which Rochefoucauld might have made, and Prosper Mérimée would have written to l'Inconnue, if he had thought of it, is utterly lost in a cloud of bad spelling:—"Some men marry to get rid of themselves, and find that the game is one that two can play at, and neither win." All the following are suggestive shrewdnesses, much better than Franklin's, whose "Poor Richard" Americans are so inclined to praise; but they are not the more biting, or the more popular, or even the more racy of the soil, for being injured by a farcical spelling:—

Time is money, and many people pay their debts with it.

Ignorance is the wet-nurse of prejudice.

Wit without sense is a razor without a handle.

Half the discomfort of life is the result of getting tired of ourselves.

Benevolence is the cream on the milk of human kindness.

People of good-sense are those whose opinions agree with ours.

Face all things; even Adversity is polite to a man's face.

Passion always lowers a great man, but sometimes elevates a little one.

Style is everything for a sinner, and a little of it will not hurt a saint.

Men now-a-days are divided into slow Christians and wide-awake sinners.

There are people who expect to escape Hell because of the crowd going there.

Most men are like eggs, too full of themselves to hold anything else.

Even when the sayings contain an ele-

ment of grotesquerie, they are improved by ordinary printing:—

It is little trouble to a graven image to be patient, even in fly-time.

Old age increases us in wisdom—and in rheumatism.

A mule is a bad pun on a horse.

Health is a loan at call.

Wheat is a serial. I am glad of it.

Manner is a great deal more attractive than matter,—especially in a monkey.

Adversity to a man is like training to a pugilist. It reduces him to his fighting weight.

Pleasure is like treacle. Too much of it spoils the taste for everything.

Necessity is the mother of invention, but Patent Right is the father.

Did you ever hear a very rich man sing?

Beware of the man with half-shut eyes. He's not dreaming.

Man was built after all other things had been made and pronounced good. If not, he would have insisted on giving his orders as to the rest of the job.

Mice fatten slow in a church. They can't live on religion, any more than ministers can.

Fashion cheats the eccentric with the clap-trap of freedom, and makes them serve her in the habiliments of the harlequin.

There are farmers so full of science that they won't set a gate-post till they have had the earth under the gate-post analyzed.

When lambs get through being lambs they become sheep. *This takes the sentiment out of them.*

Clearly printed, one sees why the cynical, shrewdly observant man became popular among a people who love proverbs, and is still popular among another people who have a yearning for laughter and cannot find the excuse for it, but his work requires clear printing and a good deal of condensation. We do not advise anybody to read "Josh Billings," for the plums in his writing are embedded in a great deal too much dough, but still we are glad to find and to show that a book which sells everywhere is not such a mass of folly and vulgarity as at first sight it appears to be. Of vulgarity there is none at all, or none except in a line probably misprinted; it is a keen, clever reporter or minister who has taken, for unintelligible reasons, to tumbling before the world.

We shall certainly have severe measure dealt out to us by posterity, and it is fortunate that those who come after us will be able to vent their spite only on our memories or our

bones. We are using all the coal in the earth at an ever-increasing rate, and it now appears that sulphur, in Europe at least, will not hold out much longer. It is estimated that the

sulphur in Sicily will be exhausted in from fifty to sixty years. There are about 250 sulphur-mines in the island, producing about 1,800,000 quintals yearly, beside the enormous quantity which is lost through defective methods of working. In 1871, 1,725,000 quintals were exported, of which England took from 500,000 to 600,000, and France about 400,000 quintals. The ore contains from 15 to 40 per cent. of pure sulphur, but the average amount extracted is only 14 per cent. The sulphur fetches at the pit's mouth about 6 fr. 60 c. The estimate of the approaching failure of the supply in Sicily appears to be well-founded, as may be gathered from an article in the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, summarizing a report addressed by Signor Parodi to the Italian Government.

Happily, the place of sulphur is in great part supplied by pyrites of iron, which is very cheap and widely diffused, and 800,000 tons of which are used in Europe annually. Pyrites is used for the manufacture of sulphuric acid, and though the iron extracted from it is of very inferior quality, it often yields a considerable quantity of copper, which doubles its commercial value. Again, large quantities of sulphuric acid are used in various manufactures, and pass into the refuse; if this refuse be chemically treated, perhaps as much as 1,000,000 quintals of pure sulphur might be extracted from it. Directly and indirectly, therefore, pyrites will supply the place of sulphur, if the latter fail, as fail it undoubtedly must in Sicily in little more than half a century.

Academy.

IRONICAL commentators on our progress and civilization are very fond of pointing out that the barbarous laws against conjuration and witchcraft were not repealed until the reign of George II. A curious illustration of the working of these laws nearly two centuries ago is contained in the following extract from a letter, preserved amongst the unpublished State papers of Francis North, afterwards Lord Keeper of the Great Seal. At the time of writing North was a Lord Chief Justice of the Common Pleas; he was at Exeter on circuit, and writes from there on August 19, 1682, to Sir Leoline Jenkins:—

"Here have been 3 old women condemned for witchcraft; your curiosity will make you enquire of their circumstances. I shall only tell you, what I had from my Brother Raymond before whom they were tried, that they were the most old decrepid despicable miserable creatures yt he ever saw, a painter would have chosen them out of the whole country for figures of that kind to have drawn by, the evidence against them was very full & fancifull, but their own confessions exceeded it—they appeared not only weary of their lives but to have a great deal of skill to convict themselves; their descriptions of the sucking devils with sawcer eyes was so natural, that the jury could not chuse but beleieve them. Sr. I find the country so fully possessed against them, that though some of the virtuosi may think these things the effects of confederacy melancholy or delusion, & that young folkes are altogether as quick-

sighted as they who are old and infirme, yet wee can not reprieve them, without appearing to denye the very being of witches, which as it is contrary to law, so I think it would be ill for his Maties service, for it may give the faction occasion to set afoot the old trade of witchfinding yt may cost many innocent persons their lives, wh this justice will prevent."

Academy.

THE FREEZING OF ALCOHOLIC LIQUIDS.—M. Melsens has made some experiments ("Naturforscher," 1873, No. 39) on the effect of low temperatures on brandy and wine, and his results accord completely with those of Horrath, who noticed an unexpectedly slight degree of sensation of cold in alcohol which had been exposed to a low temperature. Melsens finds that when brandy is cooled to 20° and even 30° or 35° below zero, it can be swallowed without any discomfort, provided only it be taken from wooden vessels. At 30° it is viscid and opalescent, and contains about 50 per cent. of alcohol. At -40° or -50° the strong alcoholic liquid becomes a solid, and if placed in the mouth in this state the pasty mass as it melts on the tongue appears less cold than ordinary ice. It has to be cooled to -60° to produce any impression of cold, and then is but rarely accounted very cold. The coldest portion prepared by Melsens had a temperature of -71°, and this produced in the mouth a sensation resembling that experienced on taking a spoonful of hot soup. He also describes the effect of great cold on effervescing wines.

THROUGH the courtesy of Dr. Daniel, we have lately seen some recipes once in the possession of Mr. Pepys, all methodically endorsed. Among them are: "Mr. Boyle's Bitter Drink or Stomachical Tincture," dated December 8, 1690, and "given mee by Mr. Evelyn,"—another, "given mee by my Lord Chancellor,"—a prescription from Dr. Dickenson, accompanied by a letter addressed "For my much Hounded Friend, Mr. Pepys, at his house in York buildings,"—another is endorsed, "Taken from one Clerke, a pretender and putter forth of Bills for this Cure, living upon Fleet Ditch, on ye further side over against Bridewell. I gave him a Guinny for it, myselfe being to find and prepare ye medicine, he only undertaking for ye success thereof." The handwriting of this note seems not to be in Pepys's handwriting; but, apparently, the recipe is.

Athenæum.

WE understand that the Greek Government have agreed to build a museum at Athens for the reception of the antiquities lately discovered at Troy by Dr. Schliemann, who has presented them for that purpose.

Athenæum.